

Mrs. Eli
&
Policy Ann

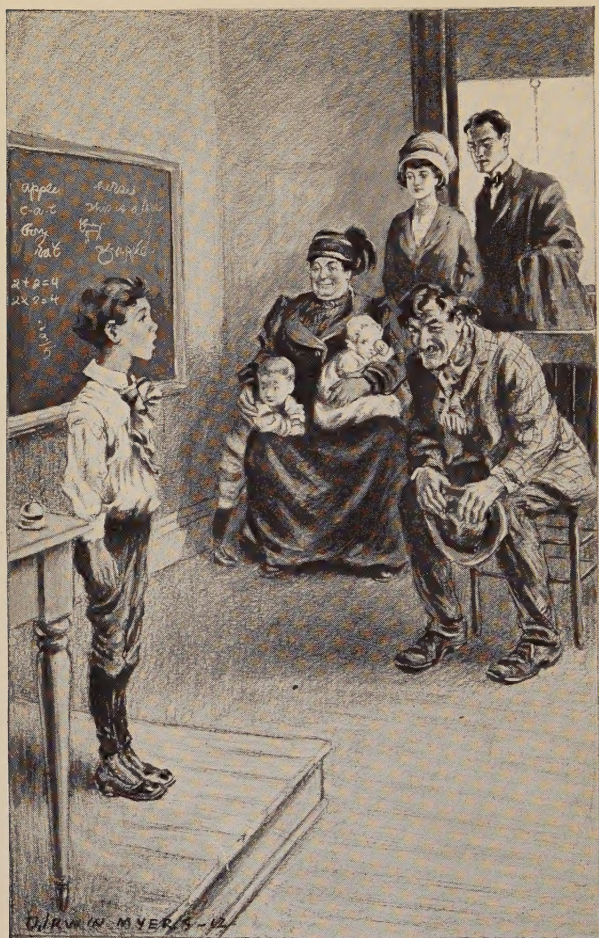
8V07X1

\$2.00

**MRS. ELI AND
POLICY ANN**



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025



Then Policiander Stood by the Teacher's
Desk and Sang.

**MRS. ELI
and
Policy Ann**

By
FLORENCE OLMSTEAD

**The Reilly & Britton Co.
Chicago**

Copyright, 1912
by
The Reilly & Britton Co.

CONTENTS

I	The House of Eli in Its Hours of Ease	7
II	Mrs. Eli Sews for Miss Phoebe, and Maudalia Has a "Spagum"	20
III	Policy Ann Takes the Center of the Stage, and Dr. Burnham Gets an Idea	32
IV	Policy Ann Goes Back to the Soil, and Dr. Burnham Makes a Scientific Discovery	46
V	Policy Ann Gets Better, and Nike Spoils a Promising Garden Scene	57
VI	Mrs. Eli Upsets the Doctor, and the Little Elis Upset the Mulligans	74
VII	Dr. Burnham Acquires a Real Practice, and Policy Ann Receives a Post Card.....	90
VIII	The House of Eli Seeks Recreation, and Dr. Morton Appears in the Role of Providence....	106
IX	Dr. Burnham Begins to See, and an Umbrella Does the Rest..	122
X	The Elis Become "Carriage Folks," and Nancy is Thrilled by Orange Blossoms	141

Mrs. Eli and Policy Ann

CHAPTER I

The House of Eli in Its Hours of Ease

APHRONIKE ELIATHENES was the name painted in large letters above the little fruit stand, which was pronounced Nike Eli by the labor-saving populace. Mrs. Eliathenes called her husband "George."

"Names is cheaper than husbands," she said, "an' I made up my mind when I married him that 'twould be mighty easy to call him somethin' else."

Mrs. Eliathenes was an American product, and there seemed at first glance little affinity between her and the opulent-looking Greek, who presided with such dignity and grace over the limited supply of fruit on the boxes by the door. But Aphronike, like the rest of his race, loved the sunshine, and so he had married his wife, with an instinct for

light and warmth not to be misled by any eccentricity of appearance.

Aphronike's was, however, a passive role. He seldom spoke, save to utter an occasional tirade in his native Greek, when untoward incidents occurred, but as no one understood him, no one was any the worse.

"Listen to your Pa, and see if you can't learn a little Greek," Mrs. Eli always said to the children, but they did not take advantage of their opportunities in that line.

Nike, the eldest, a lad of twelve, had, unfortunately, inherited his father's swarthy complexion, along with his mother's sandy hair, but he was unconscious of any discrepancy and enjoyed life. Mrs. Eli had once rubbed the blacking brush over Nike's hair, but the result gave no real satisfaction.

"It don't look natural," she had had to admit, and gave up forever the attempt to improve his appearance. "Never mind, Nike," she often said to him, "you'll be right-down good-lookin' when you get bald, an' then nobody'll be complimentin' Policy Ann, though I'll admit brownettes has got stayin' powers in pint o' looks." She gazed at Policiander's dark curls with pride as she spoke.

He had been with his older brother to carry home some sewing, and he leaned wearily against her knee, as she sat stitching by the dilapidated stove.

"Did you see Miss Phoebe?" she asked.

"She gimme a stick o' candy," he said, meditatively, "but nobody didn't ask me to sing."

"Who wants to hear you sing?" demanded his sister Nancy, aged ten. Her small arms were clasped about a bundle that proved to be the baby, and in energy and angularity she was clearly her mother's child. The baby was her constant care, and she had been allowed to name it "Maudalia." "It's the only fancy name in the family, an' Nancy made it up," Mrs. Eli always explained.

Samuel, who was next to Maudalia, was playing on the floor with three red apples, that he rolled back and forth with great delight. Every now and then, he tried to get a bite of one, but Nancy's sharp eye was always open, and she swooped down and rescued it just as he set his little white teeth for the onslaught.

"Don't you know them is to sell?" she de-

manded. "He don't seem to be sensible o' nothin'," she complained to her mother.

"He's all right, he's just taken after your Pa," Mrs. Eli said, cheerfully. "It don't do to worry about the intellects of children, Nancy. Now look at Nike. He ain't no further than the second reader, an' yet he can run that fruit stan' as good as your Pa right now."

"Nike ain't goin' to get pummoted, neither," Nancy announced. "His teacher told me so, an' she says this'll make his third year in her class, an' she says if he does get pummoted, it'll just be on account of his age."

"I'm older'n anybody in the whole class," Nike declared, with evident gratification.

"That ain't nothin' to be proud of," his mother told him. "You ought never to 'a' let your little brother get up even with you. Policy Ann is goin' to get a education. I shouldn't wonder if he grows up to be a constable, or somethin'."

"I'm goin' to be a king," said Policiander.

Nancy gave a shout of laughter. "A king! We don't have no kings."

"A Greek king," said Policiander, proudly.

"For the land sakes! Listen to the child!" Mrs. Eli exclaimed. "An' yet there's no tellin'. If Nike's got a chance to be president, Policy Ann might just as well be a king." She turned to her husband, who sat placidly by the stove, and raised her voice as she always did in addressing his foreign ear. "Is they kings in Greece?" she asked.

"King?" he repeated. "Off cose, king of Greece;" and he looked at his small son with a sudden tenderness in his liquid eyes.

"Well, I'll declare!" Mrs. Eli exclaimed. "Get your reader, Policy Ann."

The little boy crawled under the bed in the corner, and came out with his precious book. At sight of it, Nike sidled to the door, but Nancy was aware of his intention, and called out, "Nike's runnin' off to keep from studyin' his lesson."

His mother reached out quickly and caught him by the collar. "Set down by your little brother, and get him to learn you how to spell. Spellin' is a mighty handy accomplishment."

"You reckon Miss Phoebe can spell?" Nancy asked.

"What you talkin' about," Nike ex-

claimed. "There ain't a word in that reader she can't spell."

"I dunno," said Nancy, "I don't think ladies have to bother with nothin' but playin' the pianer."

"That's all right for them as can afford it," said Mrs. Eli with a sigh, "but plain readin' an' writin' will take you a mighty far ways in this world. Nobody ain't goin' to ask you questions about geography an' such things, 'cause precious few knows about 'em, but you never can tell when you'll have to be signin' your name for the wood, an' so forth an' so on. Then, look at all the billboards you have to read just in passin' along the street, an' goodness knows where I'd be if I couldn't read the patterns I meet up with, an' that's hard readin', an' don't you forget it. My education has meant bread an' butter to me."

Policiander looked up from his book and suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, Ma, Nike's forgot to tell you what Miss Phoebe said."

"You, Nike, you ain't got a piece o' head!" cried his mother.

Nike's lower jaw dropped, and he looked blankly at his little brother.

"Don't you know — 'tell her to come' —" the child prompted.

"When?" Mrs. Eli asked.

"I dunno," said Nike. "Next week, I think she said."

"No," cried Policiander, "to-morrer. She told you three times; once when you give her the bundle, an' once when she give us the candy, an' once when we was goin'."

"I tell you, Policy Ann's got sense," Mrs. Eli exclaimed, proudly. "The matter with you, Nike, is that you don' give no heed to nothin' goin' on round you. You just keep a projeckin to yourself all the time."

"He can't remember nothin'," said Nancy.

"If oranges is two for five, how much is that a dozen?" asked Nike pointedly.

Nancy looked dejected for a moment, then she said, "I could do that on my slate."

"I can do it in my head," said Nike in triumph.

"Yes, an' how do you know when you get the answer?" Nancy asked very scornfully.

"When I get the money," Nike cried in glee, and his sister was silenced.

"If you are goin' to Miss Phoebe's to sew,

Ma," Nancy said after a pause, "I don't reckon I can go to school to-morrow."

"No," said her mother, "you'll have to see to Maudalia and Sam, an' cook your Pa's dinner. Remember to boil the greens with the bacon, an' get 'em all done. Last time you give the baby colic, feedin' her on underdone greens."

"She liked 'em," said Nancy, hanging her head.

"Of course she liked 'em — she'd like cinders if she could get a chance to swallow 'em, but that ain't no reason why you should stuff her with 'em, is it?"

"No'm," Nancy admitted. "Can me an' the baby come for you when you go home?"

Policiander looked up in despair, a tear in each eye.

"He went there to-day," Nancy said.

"You can't none of you come for me," announced their mother.

Policiander's sigh merged into a cough, as he returned to the business of teaching Nike his lesson.

"Listen to that child! That sawdust tea I give him don't seem to do him a piece o' good." Her gaze dwelt upon him anxiously,

but Policiander was again absorbed with his pupil.

"Spell it," he ordered. Nike looked at the stove. Finally an idea occurred to him.

"Start me," he suggested.

"I," prompted Policiander.

"I-t, it," Nike said mechanically, an expression of relief pervading his face.

"I-t, it, i-t it, i-t it," he went on, until his small teacher gave out "box." "I couldn't spell it," said Nike, and made no attempt to do so.

"That's easy," said Nancy. "B-o-g, box."

Nike looked at Policiander for his cue, and at once reflected the contempt he saw in his face.

"I don't care," said Nancy, "I'm pummoted out of second reader, anyway. I don't have to spell them words."

"You'll get pummoted back, if you don't look out," said Nike. He was tired of the airs Nancy gave herself in coming to make reports to his teacher.

"Quit your noise, children," said their mother. "Don't you see your Pa's asleep?" She reached out a long arm, and punched her husband as he was settling over the

stove. "You'll burn your mushtash," she warned him.

"He's swunged it," cried Nancy, sniffing loudly.

Aphronike rose slowly, and stumbled into the black depths of the adjoining room, whence the bass rumble of his snores soon issued with peaceful regularity. The baby had been deposited some time before in a basket by the woodbox, and Sam, with his cheek on one of the apples, was asleep on the floor. His mother picked the little fellow up, and laying him on a couch in the corner, folded an old table cover over him. A prince imperial could not have been touched more tenderly. She leaned over him a moment, and the "greatest thing in the world" shone in her plain, hard-featured face.

Mrs. Eli, however, was not prone to waste time in sentiment, and she began collecting the apples with which Sam had been playing. One was discovered in the woodbox, and another under the safe. She polished them off with her apron, and put them on the fruitstand, that had been moved just inside the door for the night.

"Here's a spilt orange, chil'ren," she announced.

"It's mine," cried Nancy; "I seen it this afternoon."

"Yourn!" Nike exclaimed scornfully; "I reckon I'm the boss of that fruit stand when Pa's asleep. I seen that orange was spilt yesterday mornin'."

"I don't know what kep' you from eatin' it up then."

"What kep' me is because it was holdin' up good oranges on top."

"That's right, Nike, you're takin' a regular pride in the business," said his mother, handing him the orange as she spoke. "Give some of it to your brother and sister."

"Yes'm," Nike responded, and taking out his jackknife he cut out the soft part and handed it to Nancy, who burst into tears at the indignity.

The rest was shared with Policiander, and the boys sat down placidly to enjoy it, not in the least disturbed by the sniffles of their sister.

"Give her some of the good part, Nike," Mrs. Eli said at length.

"I can't," said Nike, as he polished off the last piece of skin. "Ain't no more."

"See if I don't get the very next one," Nancy exclaimed.

"Never mind, Nancy, you can have some squills, 'cause Nike done you so mean," her mother said, and took down a gummy bottle from the shelf. Nancy smacked her lips loudly over the treat, whether at the sweetness of squills or revenge it would take a student of feminine psychology to determine.

"Go to bed now," Mrs. Eli commanded, and she began to pick from the fire such coals as her excellent judgment told her might be rescued from present annihilation to be used in the morning. The children bestowed themselves in various corners of the two rooms, then Mrs. Eliathenes blew out the oil lamp, and pulled her chair close to the stove.

"It's the first time I bin warm to-day," she said with a sigh.

Policiauder coughed in his sleep, and she turned her head to listen. "It's this cool change," she said half aloud, and then, as the cough was repeated, she slipped off her

skirt and put it over him. "It's a good reason why women don't wear pants," she said to herself, as she came back to the fire. She took a large fashion paper from the shelf and settled down to an absorbed study of its pages, leaning close down to the grating in the stove, to get the faint light that shone through the bars.

"I wonder if Miss Phoebe wants me to make one of them new fangled narrow skirts to-morrow," she murmured. "I think that pink satin she's got would show up good that a-way. I sort o' set my mind on makin' that with some of this gold passamentry an' a touch o' fur."

CHAPTER II

Mrs. Eli Sews for Miss Phoebe, and
Maudalia Has a "Spagum"

MRS. ELIATHENES always arrived for breakfast when she went out to sew, and that fact involved an early rising, since her own family had to be clothed, warmed and fed before she left them. Without Nancy's able assistance she could scarcely have done it all. Nancy took on domestic cares with avidity, showing a turn of mind that could not be thwarted by any legislation, so Mrs. Eliathenes made no attempt to curb her daughter's ardor.

"She's gettin' right down useful," she told Miss Phoebe, as she sat basting up the pink satin.

"Poor little girl! you make her do too much, Mrs. Eli."

"My lan'! you don't know the child. She just as natchelly takes to them kind er

things, as some chil'ren does to croup. The way I look at it, is to be thankful she ain't got the lazy ways of Nike, an' let her have all the trainin' she can get, 'cause it ain't likely Nancy will ever be what you call a society leader. She's a plain looker, Miss Phoebe, an' them kind is best taught how to work. Of course, I couldn't count on her meetin' up with a furriner, like I done. I may say that came upon me outen a clear sky. Not as it done away with workin', though," she added as an afterthought. "You ain't got no emery bag, Miss Phoebe?"

Miss Phoebe found one. She knew Mrs. Eli of old, for it was her habit to arrive for sewing without the smallest implement of her trade.

"I wouldn't have her in the house," some one said of Mrs. Eli. "She talks so much, and gives so much trouble."

Phoebe Thornley always laughed. "I like to hear her talk," she said.

"Heavens! You probably know all the children by name."

"I do," answered Phoebe. "I know them better than that."

"You're an odd girl. Why don't you go to Maleni? You can perfectly afford it."

"I'd rather have Mrs. Eli; she cheers me up. Her very noise is cheerful."

"Well, if your nerves are strong enough to stand it. She's always laughing at the top of her lungs, and banging down the shears or the cutting board."

"That's true," said Phoebe, "but think of the spirit that can laugh under such difficulties—poverty, five children, and Aphronike thrown in. Besides, she does fit well." Phoebe always added this as an apology for her own indiscretion.

That fact had to be admitted. To be sure, though, "anything would look well on Phoebe," some one always added. There was a certain slim grace about her dainty figure that would have been hard to conceal, and her face had that loveliness of expression and color that helps to make dresses becoming.

As Phoebe had said, she liked to hear Mrs. Eli talk, and she sat listening to her that morning with an amused smile on her pretty face, marveling at the clatter that the good woman could maintain without fatigue. It

was astonishing how much noise Mrs. Eli made when she was taken out of her accustomed surroundings. At home she was only part of the general hubbub, but her loud exclamations and explosive utterances fell startlingly upon the luxurious quiet of the Thornley house. Phoebe called her a nerve stimulant.

"You don't know how nice I cut that overcoat of your Pa's down for Nike," Mrs. Eli announced suddenly.

"Why, what did you do that for? I wanted you to give it to your husband."

"Not much. I don't provide no clothes for George Eli. If he can't get 'em for himself, he can take a sheet, an' dress like his own blood kin is doin' in Greece right this minute."

"Does he know much English?" Phoebe asked, curiously.

"Well, he ain't much of a one for talkin', in no langwidge, but he understan's more than he lets on, Miss Phoebe. George is slick. Of course, I ain't complainin', 'cause he ain't been the trouble some men is, but I will say he ain't been much comp'ny for me. I knowed, when I married him, that 'twould

be some time before he'd be able to do more than ask for food an' drink, but to tell you the truth, he ain't much past that now. But for the store he seems to set on Policy Ann, I'd sometimes think, Miss Phoebe, that that man didn't have no feelin's, but seems like that child is just the very apple of his eye. He don't seem hardly to be sensible that the other chil'ren is born. Of course, though, I teaches 'em all to respect an' honor him, like the Bible says, for it's right they should, an' the Lord knew, when he made that commandment, that there is some mighty peculiar men in the world. Must 'a' been in them days, same as now. When you come to think of it, every man in the Bible was what we'd call a furriner, an' it's natural to suppose they wasn't all saints. I'm ready to try on," she announced.

As she pleated the folds of satin around Phoebe's slender waist, she went on with her conversation, apparently in no way inconvenienced by the fact that her mouth bristled with pins.

"Speakin' of that overcoat, I took the tails an' made the neatest little sack for Nancy outen 'em you ever seen. I'm afraid she's

got it on to-day, for I forgot to leave word about it. She's just dead set on it, an' I'm tryin' to save it for school. She ain't got no real notion of puttin' the best foot foremost, like you have to do to make a good appearance. . . . You think I got too much fullness in that front?" she asked, leaning back comfortably to get a good look at her work.

Phoebe surveyed herself critically in the mirror, and at that moment the door was thrown open, and Nancy rushed in, breathless and pale.

Mrs. Eli took the pins out of her mouth, and demanded excitedly, "What you done now?"

"Maudalia's got spagums."

"Spagums!" cried her mother, "an' you standin' there lookin' foolish. Run home an' put a kittle of water on the stove. Miss Phoebe, you'll have to get your Ma to unpin you."

"Wait!" cried Phoebe, "we'll have the automobile." But Mrs. Eli was already at the front door, while Nancy flew on ahead of her.

Phoebe extricated herself from the unfin-

ished pink satin, and putting on her walking dress quickly, she got a few directions from her mother as to the proper treatment of spasms and then hurried after Mrs. Eli.

Aphronike was seated placidly by the fruit stand, and he rose and made her a low bow as she came up.

"How is the baby?" she asked, eagerly.

He smiled and shook his head, but waved her into the house. On the threshold of the inner room she hesitated. Evidently the doctor had been called, for a well-dressed young man was holding poor little Maudalia in a tub of steaming water. Nancy, her knees smiting together with terror, was officiating at the hot water kettle, while Mrs. Eli rapidly mixed a mustard plaster.

"Give me a blanket," the doctor said, briefly.

Nancy, in her consternation, almost dropped the kettle on his head, Mrs. Eli looked dazedly around, and it was Phoebe who found the blanket and held Maudalia bundled up on her lap.

"Heat more water," the doctor ordered. "We may put her in again presently."

Nancy clattered briskly around, obeying

directions, while Mrs. Eli blew up the fire with the noise of a bellows. It was some time before Maudalia gave signs of returning to her normal health. The doctor sat by Phoebe's side and watched her closely. At last he said, "She'll be all right now."

His eyes met Phoebe's, and for the first time he seemed conscious of her personality. They smiled in mutual recognition, for they had met at a dinner the night before.

"I thought you said patients didn't grow on every bush," she reminded him.

"I'm doing better," he admitted, and he had unprofessional thoughts of how pretty she was. Then collecting himself, he straightened up and wrote a prescription.

"Give that to me," said Phoebe; "I'll fill it." She turned the baby over to its mother, and, rising, smoothed out her skirt.

"What gives babies spasms?" she asked.

"They eat the wrong things," the doctor answered.

"I knowed you'd do it again, Nancy," Mrs. Eli exclaimed violently. "What did you give her this time?"

"I never give her nothin'," Nancy declared, "but she just swallowed a piece of

bacon rin' before I knowed it. I seen the end of it goin' down."

"I'm just goin' to dress you off," Mrs. Eli threatened. She was regaining her poise, and felt the necessity for action.

Nancy couldn't look any more scared than she had been looking, and the entreaties of Phoebe and Dr. Burnham at last secured her pardon. Phoebe started off to the drug store, and the doctor took his leave at the same time. Aphronike moved aside to let them pass, and executed his usual elaborate bow, but made no inquiry as to Maudalia's health. Apparently he had no knowledge of what had been going on inside.

"I am tempted to learn Greek, so as to converse with Aphronike," said Phoebe.

"You are evidently a friend of the family," Dr. Burnham remarked. "Would you mind telling me how you happened to come in when you did?"

Phoebe laughed. "I think I prefer to remain a mystery, like Aphronike. It's so much more interesting."

"You are wrapped in mystery. I shall expect to see you appearing at all of my cases. It wouldn't inconvenience you

greatly, you know. It's odd," he added, after a moment's pause, "but I knew last night that you weren't just a butterfly."

"I thought you were doing a lot of moralizing all to yourself."

"Not when I talked to you."

"No, but when you should have been talking to some one else. Are you going to Mrs. Fairlie's dance to-night?"

"Are you?" he asked, pointedly.

"I am always going," said Phoebe. "I am a butterfly, in spite of your reflections."

He let the assertion go unchallenged, and just then the door of the big school building they were passing was thrown open, and a straggling line of little boys came out. Nike was in command, and his pride of office was a sight worth dwelling upon. Policiander brought up the rear, and even the majesty of the law could not prevent his calling out, "Hello, Miss Phoebe!" as he spied his friend. Dr. Burnham noticed the sudden light in the little boy's face, and smiled.

"You have an admirer," he said.

"Let's wait for him," she answered.

They stood by while Nike drew up his line on the curbing and dismissed the class. He

took off his cap with a martial air as he passed Phoebe, but looked neither to the right nor left, and began immediately to hail some imaginary boys down the street.

"I wish Nike would notice me," said Phoebe. "He always makes me feel the humiliation of my sex."

"You misunderstand him," said the doctor. "His interest in you is so very deep, he finds it necessary to hide it."

"Do you think so?" she asked. "I like Policiander's style so much better."

"It's merely his youth. Nike has learned, as men must, to conceal his sentiments as a tribute to conventionality," he answered, as Policiander came running up to hold Miss Phoebe's hand, and show his card.

Dr. Burnham won a smile from Phoebe by producing a nickel for the boy, and then the trio walked on to the drug store—Policiander to carry home the medicine to his mother.

"I wish you'd look him over some time," Phoebe said. "He's so delicate, and nothing seems to do him much good."

Policiander was walking ahead with her handbag. The doctor nodded. "I think I'll

install myself as family physician to the Elis," he said, "if you think I'm worthy of the position."

Phoebe raised her gray eyes to meet his. "That's awfully good of you," she said, and he wished her protégés would make another call on his services. Policiander here fell back to ask Phoebe whether he should buy "suckers" or chocolates with his money, or save it towards buying a watch and chain. "Chocolates is the nicest," he added, "but suckers last the longest."

"But the watch and chain would last longer than any sort of candy," the doctor reminded him.

Policiander sighed, and said that was true, and walked on, sunk in thought. When they reached the store, he came to a sudden decision, and bought three chocolates and two suckers. "The watch and chain might get broke," he said.

He held the bag of candy tightly grasped in one hand, Phoebe put the bottle of medicine in the other, and he ran home, while she and the doctor were left to stroll along in the pleasant winter sunlight.

CHAPTER III

Policy Ann Takes the Center of the
Stage, and Dr. Burnham
Gets an Idea

THE benches in the second grade were too small for Nike Eli; so were the desks. He couldn't get his feet under them, so he always sat sideways and kicked at the little boy just across the aisle. He was a very little boy, pink and nicely washed, and he did not like Nike's large men's shoes kicking at him. The teacher didn't like to see Nike's feet in the aisle either, but what could she do? It wasn't possible for Nike to kneel down all the time as he did when the Superintendent came in, and so as long as he was content with merely kicking at the little boy he was left alone.

Nike was a trial to his pretty young teacher in more ways than one. He rolled marbles up and down his desk when she was

not looking, and he said "Oh, ha" when she drew a picture on the blackboard. So, because he was both stupid and unmanageable, he was made the captain of the line in hopes that the exercise of authority would have an effect upon him. It did. He never missed a day after he was given this commanding position. His teacher used to wake at dawn and remember that Nike would be with her at the appointed hour, and he was—his legs, as usual, blocking the aisle, and luring the passer-by to stumble over them.

Across the room sat his little brother, leader of the advanced section. Nike looked upon him with pride, and occasionally sent what is known in scholastic circles as a "spit ball," to let him know that he was observed. Policiander always brushed it off, and went on copying his spelling in neat columns, or making Roman numbers on his slate. He had to make a set of Roman numbers to be hung on the wall for the exhibition day that their class was to give in connection with the third grade. The two young teachers, because they were young and enthusiastic, had sent invitation cards to all the mothers and fathers, and the two classes had prac-

ticed songs, and speeches, and number work, and reading, and nature-study, and word-study, and no end of intricate things.

There was a line of perfect spelling papers between the windows, a set of starred calculations by the door, an honor roll beneath the clock, and always the longest, and the highest and the best, was marked Policander Eliathenes.

Nike, whose name did not appear upon the walls, knew well the number of stars, and merit cards, and papers that testified to his brother's worth, and Nancy, from the third grade, stole in often after school to look at them—with some envy, it must be admitted, as she remembered the small showing that her own work was making in the decoration of her classroom. Nike did not scruple to taunt her with her deficiency.

"Oh, ha! tryin' for a long string, and you ain't got but two spelling papers up."

"You ain't got none," was the neat reply.

"I ain't tryin'," said Nike easily, and as no one could say that he was, this was final.

As to Nancy, though she did not have a long array of spelling papers, she came out strong in the singing. Piercing and shrill,

her voice rose above all the others, and she sang with the vigor of a veteran. The song seemed to her a duty which, though agreeable, must yet be pushed on to completion, and, secure in her leadership, the other children scrambled through the verses and burst forth brassily into the refrain.

Nike grunted an occasional bass note, but little Policiander opened his throat and sang. He had a sweet, clear voice, that was lost in the hubbub that Nancy and the others kept up, but his face showed the pleasure that the pretty tunes gave him, and his teacher, who had ears as well as eyes, had taught him a song to sing all by himself the day of the exhibition.

Nancy knew the song too. Indeed, she could sing it louder than Policiander, and it seemed to her strange that she should not have been chosen to sing it. Still, Miss Phoebe admired Policiander's singing, too, so there was evidently something peculiar about it, and she therefore accepted her brother's voice as an uncomprehended fact, gaining some satisfaction in bragging of it to the other children, and hushing them loudly when the moment came for him to

sing. She herself had a poem to recite—or rather, a “piece” to speak. The “piece” had come out of the second reader, though, and everybody knew it just as well as she did, which took away some of her pleasure. She had cut out any number of poems from the newspaper, but her teacher would scarcely look at them, so there was nothing for it but to settle down to “The Hungry Spider,” page 47, lesson 26. At least the people who were coming to the exhibition had never heard it, and Miss Vinson said she was sure they would like it.

There were ninety-five children in the two classes, and though all the mothers did not come, enough of them were there to make the exhibitors very excited when the great day actually arrived.

“That’s Mamie’s mother,” went around the class, or “Isik better behave hisself” would be the whisper.

Mrs. Eli, with Samuel and the baby, came in just as the first song started. Nancy had one eye on the door, and she nudged her deskmate, and sang with redoubled ardor as the party entered.

Mrs. Eli gave Samuel a jerk. "Look at your sister," she said.

But Nancy, so stiff and remote, did not seem like his sister, and the noise she was making alarmed Samuel, so that he hid his face in his mother's skirt and took only occasional peeps for at least ten minutes.

The rapid number work came next on the program, and it was always Policiander who called out first, "Twenty-three; Five; Seventeen." Occasionally some rival mathematician would differ from him, but the majority followed Policiander, and arrived at his answer just a tongue's length behind him. He made a pretty picture, for there was an unconscious look in his eyes, but his face was pale and his little body looked thinner than ever in contrast to the plump stolidity around him.

Phoebe had tiptoed in during the exhibition in mathematics, and she said to Dr. Burnham, who had come with her, "It's too much for the little fellow."

The doctor said nothing. He had just met Phoebe unexpectedly, and he was not looking at the world with a professional eye. They had both nodded to Mrs. Eli

across the room, and had smiled at Nancy. Nike wouldn't look their way, and Policander did not see them. Nancy had not believed that Miss Phoebe would really come, and now here she was, in the hat with the blue wings, sitting right by the window, and as a sort of gilding to the lily of Nancy's happiness the doctor was right by Miss Phoebe's side. The thought of rendering "The Hungry Spider" to such an audience filled her with delight, and when her name was read out she walked up to the platform with a consciousness that seemed to pervade every bone in her little body. Her head bobbed, her shoulders twisted, and she tilted back on her heels as only correct little girls know how to do.

So "The Hungry Spider" began. Nancy always placed the emphasis loudly and firmly, but she knew the piece so well that she had often to catch her breath at inconvenient places in order to keep up with herself. Still, it was pleasant for the audience to feel that she was not going to forget. Mrs. Eli was smiling complacently as Nancy attacked the last verse. Just then, there was a movement by the door, and the speaker

caught an unexpected vision of her father crowding into the room. Words suddenly failed her as she looked at him. Then, prompted by her teacher, she skipped, scrambled, and sat down, and the audience, occupied with the fruit-seller, scarcely noticed that she had finished.

Aphronike's new shoes creaked, and his dark skin and red scarf were too vivid to be overlooked. He found a chair at last, and balancing it upon two legs, leaned back and looked about for Policiander. Just across from him the child's eyes glowed happily as they met his. Aphronike's smile was quick, radiant, and it swept like sunlight across his face.

After Nancy's recitation the spelling lesson was heard. Everybody was called on and no one missed, not even Nike, who, having untangled his legs, heaved himself up and spelled "H-a-t, hat," with an air of splendid nonchalance. Up and down the lines went the words. Little girls got up with bobbing curls, and little boys brought their heels together in military fashion, but the audience gave a sigh of relaxed tension when the class again burst into song.

The reading lesson did not hold such possibilities of disaster. The second grade led off with "The Lazy Rat," and the third grade came after with "Why Does It Snow?" Nancy was a fine reader. Indeed, it was her boast that she could read with the book shut, but the nice long paragraph she should have had fell to Mamie Deitch, because Miss Hunter began at the back of the room instead of the front. Nancy could scarcely overcome her chagrin. Still, she had "talking" to read, and that always sounds well. She gave it with such fine effect that Phoebe had to cough violently, and the doctor leaned over and said, "Don't you think you had better be escorted out?"

It was a beautiful day, for early Spring was in the air, and he longed to walk with her out into the budding countryside. His young man's fancy was not turning to "The Lazy Rat" or "Why Does It Snow?" But Phoebe shook her head. She wanted to hear Policiander's song.

It came at length — the last event of the day. Policiander marched forward and a stir ran through the room — his eyes were so lovely, his small body so frail.

"Poor little chap!" said the doctor.

Aphronike put his chair down firmly on its legs and leaned forward; for this moment he had come.

Then Policiander stood by the teacher's desk and sang in his pure, liquid voice about the little boat sailing near and far, and the class came in softly on the sleepy refrain. It was worth coming to hear and to see. His mother's face was full of pride, his father's was softened by love. The song ended, and at that moment Aphronike leapt forward with a flood of incoherent words, for the small singer wavered and then sank in a little heap upon the platform.. Commotion prevailed in an instant, but Aphronike had gathered up his son even before the doctor reached him.

"Move out of the doorway!"

"Carry him outside!"

"Make room for his mother!"

Mrs. Eli was close behind her husband, with Nancy at her heels. Phoebe found herself holding Maudalia, while Samuel burrowed into her skirts. Nike jumped out of the window into the school yard, where Policiander had already been carried. The

doctor stretched him out on the step, and discovered that he had merely fainted, while Aphronike beat his breast and wept. Presently Policiander opened his eyes and asked his mother if he had sung the song nicely. But at this Mrs. Eli began to cry, and Aphronike became noisy with exclamations of joy, so that it was Phoebe who told him how beautifully he had sung.

"He will recover? Get well?" Aphronike asked the doctor, eagerly.

"He is delicate," said the doctor, and put his hand on his chest.

"Ain't there no cure for it, doctor?" Mrs. Eli asked.

"Of course there's a cure," said Phoebe, "and the doctor will tell us about it later. You must get him home now."

Aphronike shouldered the patient and started to the gate, and in each fist Policiander grasped a nickel. Halfway across the yard, the big Greek stopped. If the "most excellent doctor" would give the number of his house Nike should be sent with a bunch of bananas — "a whole bunch, not one off."

The doctor declined, Aphronike insisted,

and the matter was only settled when Phoebe and Dr. Burnham went together to Aphronike's stand and were each presented with one of the fine apples that Nike had polished that very morning. Nike himself hated to see the apples go, for it meant, of course, that he should have to polish two more to take their places, but he had learned not to interfere with his father.

Afterwards Phoebe and Dr. Burnham went for a walk, and she made him tell her what ought to be done for Policiander.

"It's just a matter of proper food and fresh air," he said, "but those things are expensive."

"Father will see about that if I ask him to," Phoebe said, confidently.

The mention of Phoebe's father was beginning of late to cast a gloom over Tom Burnham's thoughts, and, oddly enough, it suddenly caused him to remember that he had, besides the Eliathenes family, exactly five patients, three of whom were almost well. Phoebe asked him after a while why he was so silent, and he said he was wondering if a cool change might not develop a good deal of grip.

"Do you think of nothing but your profession?" she asked.

"That was a very unprofessional thought."

She looked up at him and smiled, and he was sure that he had never seen anything lovelier than the soft, irregular curves of her face.

Suddenly he said, "I wonder if you know what it is for a man to love his profession."

"I can imagine it." Phoebe's voice was as grave as his own.

"Can you imagine that it might be a sort of sacred thing to him?"

"I think a doctor might feel that way, or a minister."

"But what would you think of a man who did feel that way, and yet gave up his profession for a chance to make more money?"

Phoebe hesitated. "Possibly he would be making the sacrifice for some one who was dependent on him."

"He wouldn't be in this case."

"Then I'd know he had mistaken his calling."

The doctor was silent for a moment, and then he said abruptly, "I had a business

offer yesterday. It was unexpected, and it tempted me."

"Would it mean giving up your profession?"

"Yes."

"I didn't think that would tempt you."

"I didn't think so either."

They walked on for a time without speaking, and when they reached Phoebe's door she said, as she put her hand in his, "You won't accept the offer."

"Thank you, I don't believe that I shall," he answered slowly, but looking into her lovely face he knew that the temptation had never been stronger.

Phoebe knew it too, and she wondered how long it usually took a young doctor to get himself established.

CHAPTER IV

Policy Ann Goes Back to the Soil,
and Dr. Burnham Makes a
Scientific Discovery

WHY not send the little boy out to the farm?" said Phoebe's father, just as she had thought he would say, when she sat on the arm of his chair. So she kissed him and started to carry out her plans. The "farm" was a small country place belonging to Mr. Thornley, presided over with great efficiency by a certain Mrs. Tippins, more or less assisted by her husband, whose nature was not aggressive.

If Policiander was to go, Mrs. Eli must go with him, and Maudalia must go with Mrs. Eli. Phoebe took them out in the big automobile, but Nancy was left behind to go to school, take care of Samuel, and cook for her father and Nike.

"Don't rile your Pa none and he won't

give you no trouble as long as his meals is reg'lar," said Mrs. Eli to her at parting. "And be sure to wash out Nike's shirt on Saturday."

"Sposen he won't take it off," said Nancy.

"Then don't give him no syrup on his hominy. And Samuel ain't to have no squills 'less he strangles. He's got so lately he just makes a dead set for them squills every night, but you must remember, now, Nancy, that bottle ain't filled by no hydrant."

"Is greens cheaper'n cabbage, or is cabbage cheaper'n greens?" asked Nancy anxiously.

"Ain't scarcely no difference. You can have one one day, and one the next, but don't you do no cooking with your nice school dress on, and tell your teacher you'll come just whenever you c'n get off."

"I don't know how I c'n go at all with Samuel taggin' along," Nancy complained.

"Didn't I tell you Miss Jones said you must drop Samuel to her house every mornin'?"

"He ain't goin' to drop," said Nancy. "He's scared of Miss Jones's one eye."

"Don't you give in to Samuel 'bout them kind of things," exclaimed Mrs. Eli. "Just you drop him and run on to school whenever you c'n get off."

"Spos'n Sam falls down into Miss Jones's cellar," Nancy suggested.

"Spos'n your Pa should get the mumps," said Mrs. Eli, impatiently. "'Tain't worth while thinkin' of all the things that might happen, but just you keep on followin' the leadin's of your mentality, and when you don't know what to do, pick out something you don't like."

"Here's Miss Phoebe," cried Policiander, running in from the corner where he had been keeping watch, and then they heard the purring of the big automobile at the door. Aphronike rose from his seat by the fruit-stand and embraced Policiander.

"King of Greece," he said lovingly, and his white teeth showed in a smile. Then the little fellow climbed into the automobile, and Aphronike returned elaborate thanks to Phoebe while they waited.

The noise of the machine excited Mrs. Eli so that she remembered a dozen different things she ought to have done, and set

about them all in the moment that remained. At last, however, they got under way, and just as they were turning the corner Policander, looking back to wave to his father, discovered Nancy gesticulating wildly as she ran after them.

"She's just playin'," said Mrs. Eli. "Don't you notice her."

But there was a commanding air about Nancy, and Phoebe ordered the chauffeur to stop. The child came up to them panting. "You forgot Maudalia," she said.

"My land!" cried Mrs. Eli, and jumping out she ran back for the baby. Maudalia was fast asleep in the back room, so it was no wonder that she was forgotten.

"She ain't what you might call the leadin' lady of the piece," Mrs. Eli explained to Phoebe, "and she just natcherly passed out of my mind. Don't it show you how you have to make a noise in the world to get your rights? If Maudalia had cried she wouldn't have been lef' behin'."

But Maudalia was not apt to make a stand for her rights. She was a happy-tempered, rosy baby, and made few comments on life, but accommodated herself to any convenient

pair of arms and smiled at the smallest pleasantry. It was this trait that later on won for her the devotion of the childless Mrs. Tippins, who had not looked with approval upon the coming of Mrs. Eli and her family to the farm.

"It means trouble," she had said when her husband had announced their prospective arrival.

"Oh, I guess not," he said, easily.

"They'll have to eat, won't they?" she asked.

Mr. Tippins admitted they would, and the discussion ended, for as Mrs. Tippins often said, she was "not one to backbite," and if Tippins wanted to quarrel he would have to go elsewhere. Tippins, however, had little initiative, and as long as his pipe was tolerated in his wife's immaculate kitchen he was content to stay, though he could have wished at times for a more loquacious companion on the other side of the fireplace.

"You ain't much of a talker, Maria," he said to her one night.

"Has it took you fifteen years to find that out?" she asked.

"No," he admitted, "no, I been knowin' it for quite a while."

"There was a day when you said you couldn't abide a gabblin' woman, Thomas Tippins," she remarked, accusingly.

"That's so," he answered, "but as the Bible says, there's a time for all things, Maria."

"Exactly. And after fifteen years of married life it's a time for keepin' silent."

"As for married life, I reckon there's two sides to it," Tippins retorted.

"I don't question it," said his wife, and fell again into silence no more reassuring than the one in which later she watched the Elis descend from Phoebe's automobile.

"Would you kindly hold the baby?" said Mrs. Eli, handing her to Mrs. Tippins, and diving under the seat for some strange-looking bundles.

Maudalia snuggled into the inhospitable arms and laughed.

"Now I'll take her," said Mrs. Eli.

"You tend to your parcels," said Mrs. Tippins, "and mind that boy don't track in mud."

And so, bearing Maudalia, she led the way

into the house. Maudalia was warm and soft, and presently Mrs. Tippins began to cluck to her to make her laugh again, as she sat rocking her by the fire.

"I see you are one to spoil children," said Mrs. Eli.

"I don't know about spoilin' them," answered Mrs. Tippins, and her face relapsed into its usual severe expression.

"Just put her on the floor when you get tired holdin' her," said Mrs. Eli. "She's be-ginnin' to try her legs, and I often keep 'em in the woodbox when they start walkin'. You ain't so apt to step on 'em, and they can steady theirselves holdin' on to the sides."

"This child won't have to set in the wood-box in my house," said Mrs. Tippins, decidedly.

"You certainly got a kind heart," exclaimed Mrs. Eli. "It's no wonder Maudalia's taken to you."

"You think she does?" the other asked.

"She certainly do," said Mrs. Eli. "It's few got such a knack with 'em."

Mrs. Tippins was pleased, and when Poli-ciander leaned against her knee and asked

for a drink of water she fell an easy victim to his soft eyes and pathetic frailness.

"You'd scarcely know her for the same woman," Mr. Tippins told Mrs. Eli, when the children had been there a week.

"I tell you, ma'am," he went on, "there's been days when Maria wouldn't so much as ask after my health."

"Did you ever," exclaimed the visitor. "That's somethin' on the order of George Eli."

Mr. Tippins found that the incursion of the Elis made life very agreeable. And not the least benefit from their coming was the increased amiability of his wife. Not only had the children found their way to Mrs. Tippins' heart, but Mrs. Eli had offered to cut over her best black silk, and the work was going forward rapidly.

"Fullness is more becomin' to thin figgers," said Mrs. Tippins, as she ran through "The Farmer's Wife" for a pattern.

"Thin figgers is the only ones that has a showin' nowadays," said Mrs. Eli.

"You don't say so!" Mrs. Tippins exclaimed, with evident gratification.

"It's the truth. The way I have to plan

and contrive, so's to give some of these here stout ladies a stylish appearance, is a caution."

"Land sakes! And thinness is always been such a cross to me."

"Well, you needn't lose no more sleep over it, for you are right up to date now, Mis' Tippins. What do you think of a panel of pleatin'?"

"I don't know as I ever seen such a thing," said Mrs. Tippins, slowly. "I was quite took with that little gray dress Miss Phoebe had on the other day. I don't spose you could manage nothin' of that kind."

"That's a peculiar cut, Mis' Tippins, and I wouldn't advise it. Miss Phoebe certainly do set off that little dress, though," Mrs. Eli admitted.

"Speakin' of Miss Phoebe," said Mrs. Tippins, "it's singular she don't get married."

"It is, and it isn't," Mrs. Eli declared. "Considerin' the crowd that's after her all the time, it would seem like she might make a choice, but, again, considerin' what men is, it ain't to be wondered at that she don't."

"That's true," Mrs. Tippins agreed. Then she looked up at the kitchen clock.

"It's time for Policiander to have his milk."

"What a feelin' you've got for time," exclaimed Mrs. Eli.

"Ten o'clock means ten o'clock," said Mrs. Tippins, "it don't mean half past eleven."

She went to the window and called Policiander from the garden, where he was making little people out of the morning-glory flowers.

"Why is milk white?" he asked, as she poured out a glassful.

"Because it is," said Mrs. Tippins, shortly. "Don't step on the flower beds," she cautioned him.

"No, ma'am," said Policiander. "Why are some mornin'-glories blue and some pink?"

"Because the Lord makes 'em so," said Mrs. Tippins.

"Do a cookie go with this glass of milk?" he asked, anxiously.

"No, it don't."

The little boy's face fell, but he said, "All right, ma'am," and then Mrs. Tippins said perhaps he might have a small cookie. "He's took such a fancy to my cookies," she told

Mrs. Eli when Policiander had gone back to his morning-glories.

Dr. Burnham found him still engaged with them when he came out on his wheel some time later. They sat on a bench, and Policiander talked, while the doctor watched him and answered questions.

"What makes the plants grow?" Policiander asked.

"The sun," said the doctor, at random.

"And that makes us grow?"

"Yes."

"And if we could go without clothes, would we grow bigger and stronger?"

A sudden gleam shot from the doctor's eyes. He wondered how much logic there was in the little boy's reasoning. The suggestion had fallen in fertile soil, and that night Dr. Burnham went to the library and took down a recent work called "Potentiality of the Sun." He carried the book home with him, and when at last he turned out his light, there was a look of conviction on his face.

"It's a cure," he said, half aloud, "and I'll prove it."

CHAPTER V

Policy Ann Gets Better, and Nike
Spoils a Promising Garden Scene

DR. BURNHAM showed considerable ingenuity in arranging for Policiander's sun baths. First, with the assistance of Mr. Tippins, he put a sliding window sash in position, right on the edge of a field of oats, where all day the sunlight might fall without interference. Back of this, on two sides, he tacked strips of sail cloth to keep off the wind from the cot that he placed beneath the window sash. The head of the cot projected beyond the glass, for, as the doctor told Mr. Tippins, Policiander's brains needed no forcing. Mr. Tippins was much interested in the new treatment.

"Anything like a cucumber frame is sorter easy for me to ketch on to," he said.

Policiander laughed. He liked to think he was a cucumber, and the sun felt good on

his bare legs and body. He was usually languid enough not to mind the long hours of stillness, and there was always something going on in the world around him; the sweet, green world, with the blue arch of sky above. Indeed, Mrs. Tippins alone looked upon the treatment with disfavor.

"It ain't decent," she said, sternly. "If it was just rollin' up his trousers and his sleeves a little way, that would be one thing, but strippin' is quite another, and I'm surprised you don't see it that way, Mis' Eli."

"Well, the doctor seems to think it is the thing to do."

"Doctors is not the best judges in such matters."

"He ain't hardly more than a baby."

"The age ain't got nothin' to do with it, Mis' Eli. It's the ideas you are givin' the child. You are raisin' him loose. Of course, though, I s'pose your husband bein' a fur-riner your principles on such points is not what they was."

"Nobody ain't what they was," Mrs. Eli answered, "and if the doctor thinks this here sunnin' is goin' to help my child, I'm willing he should try it. 'Tain't as though

it could do him no harm," she added, with an air that showed a woeful state of uncertainty as to the advance of science.

"Give me an old doctor every time," declared Mrs. Tippins. "These young men are always tryin' somethin' new, they nor nobody else don't understand."

"I'm not sayin' I wouldn't prefer an old doctor myself," Mrs. Eli replied, "but beggars can't be choosers, as the sayin' is, Mis' Tippins, and as long as Dr. Burnham ain't puttin' somethin' I don't approve of down the child's throat I have to let him have his way."

"Well, I'm not one to interfere," said Mrs. Tippins, "and I see your position. But if it was my child, I'd put a nightshirt on him."

The doctor was prepared for opposition, but as long as Policiander enjoyed the treatment, he felt sure that it would be carried out, and he watched the case with interest.

At the end of the first week Policiander's color was better.

"It's sunburn," said Phoebe.

"Partially," Burnham admitted, but held to his assertion, nevertheless.

They had met at the farm, apparently by

chance, but Phoebe did not know that the doctor had seen the direction her automobile was taking, and had scorched behind her on his bicycle down the road. So when they had partaken of Mrs. Tippins' cookies, they strolled together in the garden.

"'How sweet the moonbeams sleep on yonder bank,'" he quoted.

"You mean the sunbeams on yonder bench."

"It's all the same," he said; "the thought's the thing. Will you sit, Jessica?"

"I'm afraid I haven't a soul for poetry," said Phoebe. "I'd rather sit on a bench than a bank."

"This is poetry," he said, softly.

"Yes, the garden and the sunshine," Phoebe agreed.

"You know I don't mean that," he said; "it's the poetry of life."

"I shouldn't care for a life that was all poetry," Phoebe said, evasively.

"I'm in no danger of being surfeited with it in mine," he exclaimed a little bitterly.

"Never mind," said Phoebe, "the wistaria is blooming; so is the spirea, and the air couldn't be softer."

"You have left out the best part of it all," he told her.

Phoebe turned away to pick one of Poliander's morning-glories. "What is the best part?" she asked, slowly.

"You are here," he answered.

Before Phoebe could speak, however, a rustling, crackling noise was heard in the hedge just behind them. Turning, they saw a figure scrambling through the thicket, and in a moment Nike emerged, much awry as to his clothing and scratched as to his face, but showing every one of his large white teeth in a smile at his achievement.

"Why, Nike! Where did you come from?" cried Phoebe.

"From town," said Nike, briefly.

"Don't you know better than to crash through a hedge?" asked the doctor with annoyance. "Why didn't you go around to the gate?"

"I seen you and Miss Phoebe through the bushes, an' I thought I'd surprise you," said the boy.

Phoebe laughed. "Well, you did. Did you walk out?" she asked.

"I walked some, an' hitched behin' a wag-

gin some. Is Policy Ann got on any clothes?" he asked of the doctor after a moment's hesitation.

"Who told you he didn't have on clothes?"

"A boy, an' I punched him."

"That's right," said the doctor; "but you can go and see for yourself. He's over there in the field."

"The fame of your treatment has gone abroad," said Phoebe, when Nike had left them.

"Doesn't it show how the race has swathed itself in convention? Even Nike has a deep regard for such matters. By the way, though," he went on, "the scientific side of the case also has interested some one. I had a talk with Dr. Morton not long ago, and he's coming out to see Policiander with me some day."

"Explain your theory to me just as you did to him," said Phoebe. She was not sorry that Nike had interrupted their more absorbing conversation of the moment before, for she was not ready to hear what Dr. Burnham had been on the point of telling and, after all, since they were together, it mattered very little what they talked about as

they sat in the aromatic, overgrown garden of the farm house.

As for Tom Burnham he realized, after a moment, that Nike had saved him from saying something that he ought not to say, for he had resolved never to tell Phoebe of his love until he could ask her to be his wife, and he had been on the point of breaking his resolution without so much as giving it a thought. He was startled at such evidence of his weakness, and clung to science in desperation for the rest of the morning. Phoebe read his heart, and both felt the strange, sweet charm of an influence that they could not define. Words matter very little when love is young, so Burnham talked of the case, and she, making fairly intelligent comments, thought all the while of him.

Phoebe had come to the farm in her electric runabout, but the doctor said it was not safe for her to drive alone through the woods, so he took the seat beside her going home, and Nike was delegated to bring his wheel to town. Nike would have preferred to ride with Miss Phoebe himself, but he was glad not to have to walk home, and he readily accepted the doctor's charge without

giving too much attention to his injunction to be careful.

"How can you be careful when you're ridin' a wheel?" thought Nike. "You just ride it, an' if it busts you can't help it. Anyway, it's iron, and it ain't likely to bust."

The doctor thought it was extremely "likely to bust" under Nike's guidance, but he went off with Phoebe in great satisfaction nevertheless.

The woods were carpeted with young ferns, and the dogwood trees made great splotches of white amid the green as they rode along in the fragrance of myrtle, sweetgum and pine. Burnham resented the time they were making, while Phoebe hoped he would not notice that she was running the machine at its lowest speed. The longest lane has a turning, however, and this one turned into Phoebe's street. A tall, good-looking man stood at her door, and as they came up he ran quickly down the steps to meet her.

"Why, Hubert! Isn't this fine?" she cried. "I thought you were in London."

"Well, now, how long did you expect me

to stay there?" he said with surprising directness.

Dr. Burnham at once found his British air and accent most distasteful, and wondered at the cordiality of Phoebe's manner. She was so absorbed in greeting the stranger that she forgot at first to introduce the two men, so Burnham stood by for a moment and found it long enough for him to form a most unflattering opinion of Mr. Hubert Humphries, of the firm of Humphries and Landsdowne, Liverpool.

"Why did your young friend regard me with such severity?" asked Humphries, when Burnham had gone.

"He has a grave expression," said Phoebe.

"He has, indeed, and to be entirely frank, I don't seem to care for him."

Phoebe laughed.

"I hope we shan't meet again," said the Englishman.

"I hope you won't," said Phoebe, and they didn't, although Mr. Humphries was more often with Phoebe than the requirements of his father's firm in Liverpool seemed to permit.

Burnham called on Phoebe the next even-

ing, but was told that she was dressing for a dance, and in going down the step he recognized the Englishman's shoulders as a man passed him in the gloom. Of course there was no reason why she shouldn't go to a dance with Humphries if she wanted to, but there seemed no need for the fellow to ride with her in the morning. They passed the doctor once as he was going to pay a professional visit. Burnham bowed stiffly and Humphries raised his hat, but Phoebe happened to be looking the other way.

"Who was that?" she asked, noticing that he had bowed.

"Your friend, the doctor."

Phoebe turned in her saddle, but the doctor was not looking after her. "He has a new patient," she thought happily, for she knew the names and addresses of all the old ones.

Burnham was in no amiable mood when he went in to see his new patient, but the sick man was peculiar and liked his brusqueness. In the end, therefore, Phoebe rather helped the doctor in his career by apparently failing to see him that morning. Old Mr. Tyson declared that "he had more sense

than some," which was high praise, considering the grudge that the old man seemed to bear against his fellows. He had his following, though, like most decided characters, and Burnham heard from two or three unexpected patients that he was the doctor who had "more sense than some." He never traced Mr. Tyson's approval to its cause, and did not know how indirectly Phoebe had affected his fortunes.

It seemed to him years since they had sat together by the morning-glory vine at the farm. Only a few days had gone by, but the sense of Phoebe's remoteness was unbearable, and he called again the very next afternoon. She was not at home. He felt baffled, and the good sense that Mr. Tyson had commended did not keep him from feeling also distinctly angry. He was trying to argue himself into a more placid frame of mind, when just as he turned the corner he glanced back and saw Phoebe and Mr. Hubert Humphries coming out of the house.

Burnham looked at them steadily for a moment and raised his hat with dignity. Phoebe returned his bow, and he was glad to see that she knew he had seen them. She

did know it, of course, but she was not aware that he had just been told she was not at home. The butler had seen her go out ten minutes before, and did not know that she had come back for some forgotten trifle. So he told Burnham that she was out, and Burnham, seeing Phoebe and the hated Englishman with her, vowed a mighty vow that he would never knock at that door again, and nursed his wrath while the sun sank to a purple setting, and Phoebe walked across the windy common with Humphries, and refused him for the third time in their acquaintance.

Before the week ended Humphries set out again for London, while Phoebe went her way and Tom Burnham went his. He didn't ask for an explanation, and she knew no necessity for giving one, so they met occasionally and bowed and passed on, and each thought of the other by day and by night, guarding the secret with studied manners and restless eyes.

All the while it was evident that Policander was improving. The case occasioned a good deal of comment as time went on, and Burnham was asked to give an account

of it to the medical society. Then one morning he met Dr. Morton, who stopped his automobile. "How is the sun-bather coming on?" he asked.

"Go out and see," Burnham answered.

The older man looked at his watch. "Can you spare this hour?"

Burnham thought he could, and he got into the machine and brought the eminent physician at last to Policiander's glass house on the edge of the field of oats.

"You don't throw stones, do you, my little man?" Dr. Morton asked, smiling.

"No, sir; because Miss Phoebe says people in glass houses mustn't."

"That's sage advice."

"That's just what Miss Phoebe said," the boy told him.

"Who is Miss Phoebe?" Dr. Morton questioned.

"She's just Miss Phoebe, and she's pretty, ain't she, Dr. Burnham?" Policiander asked.

But Dr. Burnham was busily adjusting the pulleys and didn't seem to hear.

"She comes to see me two times every week now, since Ma has gone home, and Dr. Burnham comes two times, but they never

come together. She asks me, though, all what the doctor says and what he does."

The exertion and the sun had apparently turned Tom Burnham's face quite red.

"She must be interested in science," Dr. Morton commented.

"She's mighty sweet, ain't she, Doctor?" asked the child insistently.

"Yes," said Burnham gravely, after a moment's hesitation.

Dr. Morton liked his manner, but relieved the situation by discussing the case in hand. The young man had in no way suffered in the estimation of his senior by the revelation that Policiander's question had called forth. Also it developed that his medical views were sound, and his theories balanced by a substratum of common sense.

"I'll admit that the child is in excellent condition," said Dr. Morton, as they drove into the city; "but wouldn't the food and air have done the work just as well with his clothes on?"

"If I thought that, I wouldn't have taken them off," said Burnham, briefly.

Dr. Morton laughed. He liked a man to stand up to his convictions.

"I am beginning to see why Tyson thought you had 'more sense than some'," he said.

Burnham made an exclamation of impatience. "I've heard that from six different sources," he said, "and it has actually sent a patient or two."

"Well, what's the harm?"

"Oh, I don't know," said the other. "It seems such a clap-trap phrase. Old Tyson, too, is about as fit to judge as a barber's pole. I got angry with him and wouldn't write him a prescription, and now he is recommending me to other people. They come to me just because he sent them, yet I might have all the skill and learning in the country, and I'd starve if I waited for them to find it out."

"Why shouldn't they find it out?" Dr. Morton asked.

"Well, there's no particular reason, but I'd rather not have them come, than do so under those conditions. Tyson doesn't know whether I've got any sense or not."

"How long have you lived here, Burnham?"

"Two years."

"Those of us who have been here longer," said Dr. Morton, "have come to think Lem Tyson a judge of men. We usually find him to be right in such matters."

"I know he's right," said Burnham boldly, "but he has no professional reason for his opinion, and I feel as though I were getting patients under false pretences. Naturally I don't care to do that."

"That's an interesting point. Come and discuss it with me some evening," said Dr. Morton, amused with the young man's firmness.

"I don't think you understand what I mean," Burnham asserted.

"On the contrary, I scarcely think many people could understand you as well," said the older man, more seriously. "But 'I once was young, and now am old,' and I say to you that your duty begins with your opportunity, and that's when a patient asks your services. It's only your self-love that wants to know why he comes."

Burnham was silent a moment, then he said, "You think 'pride in the heart of man' is my trouble?"

"I do; but I should like to treat your case.

In plain words, young man, I think you're worth saving."

"Much obliged," said Burnham. "I rather think I'll be the better for this interview."

"Come and have another when you care to."

"Thank you," Burnham said, and the two men shook hands as they parted.

There was a sad expression in the older man's eyes as he looked into Burnham's face. "I wish I dared tell you something else," he said.

"What is it, sir?" said Tom, though something told him what was in Dr. Morton's mind.

"When I was a young man I was afflicted with your own complaint — pride. I willfully misunderstood some one — and I've never married. You ought to eradicate that fault, Dr. Burnham."

Tom paled under the keen, friendly eyes. "I'll take up the professional side first," he said, smiling faintly, but he looked his gratitude for the other's interest as he spoke.

CHAPTER VI

Mrs. Eli Upsets the Doctor, and the
Little Elis Upset the Mulligans

THE town was oppressively hot as summer came on, and Phoebe went to the seashore.

“Don’t make no different if it’s July or January, it’s always a cold day for us when she leaves,” Mrs. Eli told Dr. Burnham. She had happened to be in the doorway as he passed, and he had stopped to ask after the children. “Goodness knows what will become of us when she gets married and goes for good.”

The doctor turned to watch Samuel at play on the pavement. “Is she to be married soon?” he asked.

“I daresay she’ll wait till fall, now,” said Mrs. Eli. “She wouldn’t hardly know what kind of clo’es to fix up for this season of the year. Did you meet her intended?”

"Why — er — who is he?" the doctor asked, in as casual a manner as he could.

"Well, to begin with, he's a furriner, and that sort of set me against him, but of course an Englishman is different from other kinds, and he certainly is a good-looker. Seems like he was just made for Miss Phoebe — they're sure a handsome pair. The only trouble is, I don't think he's nothing but a plain mister, an' I ain't never heard of no high-class Englishman that wasn't a lord, or a duke, or something of that sort. Still, he's pleasant spoken," Mrs. Eli admitted, "an' you ought to see the way he looks at her. They come down here one day because Miss Phoebe wanted to see me about that green foulard she'd just bought, an' you would have thought she was a queen, the way he kep' lookin' at her. Oh, he certainly loves her hard. I told Miss Phoebe next day. I says, 'Lords an' dukes is all right,' I says, 'but there ain't nothin' but true love can get you through the troubles of married life.'"

"What did she say?" the doctor asked quickly.

"Oh, she looked at me mighty serious. Some people thinks Miss Phoebe is all

laughin' and jokin', but she kin be as solemn as a preacher, as she says, 'It's the only thing that counts, Miss' Eli.' Yes, sir, that's what she says to me. Then he come to take her horseback ridin', an' she gone off with him."

"I didn't know they were to be married," said the doctor, as Mrs. Eli came to a pause in her narrative.

"Well, Miss Phoebe didn't tell me she was, nor she didn't tell me she wasn't. But I just used my own eyes, an' I put two and two together. Why, Nancy, child as she is, she says to me, 'Ma,' she says, 'they look just like a bride an' groom.' Nancy's taken a great fancy to his looks, 'cause she says he's just like a picture in second reader called 'Uncle Frank and the Rabbits,' an' every time that child seen him comin' down the street, she'd say, kinder easy, 'Hello, Uncle Frank.'"

The doctor laughed loudly, and Mrs. Eli went on with her story. "She actually told Miss Phoebe about it and showed her the picture, an' she couldn't help laughin' herself when she seen it, but she says, 'Why, he's better lookin' than that, Nancy,' an'

Nancy couldn't do nothin' but hang down her head, an' say she thought Uncle Frank was pretty in the book. Well, sir, that was my chance, an' I says, 'Pretty is as pretty does, an' I hope he'll make you a good husband, Miss Phoebe.' "

The doctor found the conversation intensely interesting, and wondered if it might not be well to suggest going inside to see Maudalia. However, he merely shifted to the other foot and waited to hear more.

"I tell you, Doctor, Miss Phoebe has sure got a long head on her," Mrs. Eli continued. "She says right away, 'Good lookers are not always good husbands, are they, Mis' Eli?' I says, 'No, ma'am, they are not,' an' George Eli was sittin' right on that same stool yonder, an' he heard every word we said. Not that he let on none, for that ain't his way; but he heard. Don't you never fool yourself thinkin' he's deaf."

It was difficult to stop Mrs. Eli when fairly started on the subject of Aphronike's peculiarities, but the doctor waited for her to draw breath, and then said, "Did you see Miss Thornley before she left?"

"I seen her just yesterday," Mrs. Eli told

him, "an' it certainly is good she is goin' to take a change. She's just as pale as your shirt, an' her clo'es is right down loose on her. I told her bein' in love was wearin' her out, an' she says, 'I'm afraid it is, Mis' Eli.' An' when you come to think of it, it is kinder unsettlin', her intended bein' so far away, an' all."

The doctor turned abruptly at that, and in a moment he had said good morning, and was walking down the street at a swinging pace.

"He's a peculiar one," Mrs. Eli exclaimed. "He didn't give me no time to ask him about Samuel's swellin'."

Samuel himself was pursuing the ice-wagon and seemed in no way concerned about his swelling. Nancy, standing with Nike on the back step of the wagon, handed him a piece of ice, and secured a piece for herself before they were discovered. The day was warm and the quiet street offered few outlets for their energies. Aphronike had gone fishing, and Nike returned to the pile of cantaloupes. Nancy and Samuel sat on the curbstone and ate the ice, and Maudalia toddled out and joined them.

"Give her piece of your ice, Nike," said Nancy.

"Give her piece of yours," Nike retorted.

"You got more than me," said Nancy; "an' the man says he's goin' to have you arrested if you take such a big piece again."

"Then Maudalia might get arrested, too, if I give her any," Nike said shrewdly.

"Ma!" cried Nancy, "Nike won't give Maudalia none of his ice."

"Shut up!" Nike commanded, and broke off a small piece for the baby.

"What's the matter?" asked Mrs. Eli, putting her head out of the window.

"Nancy's been climbin' on the ice-wagon again," said Nike quickly.

"It would serve you right to break your legs climbin' on that ice-wagon," said her mother with severity.

Nancy hung her head.

"Oh, ha!" cried Nike, in triumph. Then they sat in quiet for a time, while Nike, whose piece of ice was larger than the others, put it on his head and let the cool drops trickle down his neck. Suddenly Nancy broke the silence.

"Let's have a theayter," she suggested.

Nike gave the matter some consideration. "What do they have in 'em?" he asked at last.

Nancy thought for a moment. "I'll wear Ma's shawl and hold Samuel by the hand, an' you kin say, 'Woman, leave them little chil'ren, an' fly off with me.' "

"What would I be sayin' that for?" Nike asked. "Let's me get Pa's pistol an' you kin holler for me to shoot that ruffyan."

"An' who would be him?"

"Samuel," said Nike promptly.

"He ain't got sense enough for nothin' like that," Nancy decided. "I tell you that picture that was up on the fence by the schoolhouse last week was nice. I'd be standin' by the window lookin' out, an' you could be chokin' Samuel down on the ground. There wasn't no readin' underneath it, though, so I don't know what to say. Let's go over to the Mulligans an' play in their back yard."

The Mulligans, of whom Nancy spoke, were two enticing little girls. Their father kept a saloon, while their mother, in Mrs. Eli's phrase, "kept her bed," and they lived in a large, out-at-elbows house, bare and

paintless, in a wilderness of sand. Mamie Mulligan was nine years old, and Annie was eight, and, except for the occasional remonstrance of the cook, they led an untrammelled existence. They were sitting on the front step, feeling the heat, when the Elis arrived, but they at once arose and proposed a game of robbers in the back yard. Mamie and Nike would be the robbers, while Annie and Nancy could be the ladies, with Samuel and Maudalia for children, sleeping in the woodshed.

Mamie Mulligan was as good as a boy any day, and to her strength and activity she added so nimble a wit, that Nike followed her meekly, and did not feel that sense of his own superiority that Nancy's companionship inspired. His visits, indeed, were a tribute to Mamie's charms, for he played second fiddle when she was present, and fell in with very good grace to her suggestions. The neighbors called her a wildcat, and she did not look unlike one as she scrambled over the fences, or pounced upon some unwary intruder. Her hair was red and her eyes distinctly green as they looked out from beneath the untidy, flying locks.

She began all games by calling out, "Me first, an' Annie second," and but for the fact that she had a lively imagination and a resourceful brain, society would have left her alone. As it was, however, she started most interesting sports, and her decrees as to who should take part in them, and who should be left out, were never questioned. "Mamie says you can't play," settled the matter beyond argument. No one dared quarrel with her save upon great provocation, for it was known that she both clawed and bit when she fought. Annie was quite different — round, blond and amiable.

This morning, when the game of robber began to pall, Mamie climbed to the top of a sycamore tree in the Mulligan's yard and let herself down from branch to branch, hanging by both hands, and feeling with her toes for a footing, while Nike looked on, an admiring beholder, and Annie, and Nancy with her two young charges, watched from a distance, in awe-struck silence. "She'd kill us if she was to fall on us," said the cautious Nancy, and took Samuel firmly by the hand.

When Mamie had sprung to the ground, Nike mounted to the top for his turn, while

Nancy prophesied calamity and watched his descent with eagerness.

"You mos' fell, you mos' fell!" she called out in glee.

But Nike did not fall and made the ground in safety. "Let's get somethin' to eat," Mamie suggested.

There was no objection raised to this, and they went in to interview the cook. Maggie, the Mulligan's cook, however, was not on good terms with Mamie at the moment, and had no intention of furnishing refreshments for her friends.

"Sure, Oi've nothin' to give ye," she declared. "It's a wonder ye don't be afther atin' in yer slape."

"I'll come in and hunt if you don't give us somethin'," Mamie threatened.

"An' what would Oi be doin' beforehand?" asked the cook, standing with arms akimbo in the doorway.

"Old Irish!" jeered Nike.

"Yis, it's Oirish Oi'm proud to be, and me great-grandfather was a royal personage, while your own was shovelin' bananas in the hould of a ship." With that she shut the door, and when Nike had kicked upon it and

Mamie had made faces through the window, honor was satisfied and there seemed nothing more to do.

"Come on, let's eat the things on the side-board," said the resourceful Mamie.

She led the way into the dining room, and Annie helped to get down the "things"—vinegar, syrup, a small amount of sugar and a little mustard. They were tried separately, and in combination, and were found to be only moderately exhilarating. Then Nike discovered the dumb waiter, and learned with delight that it led straight into the enemy's country. The children could hear Maggie clattering below, and Nike and Mamie hung over the abyss and hurled language at her. Immediately the cook began to sing—a wild Irish lament that drowned the insults. At last Nike proposed that he should descend in the dumb waiter, and force himself upon the cook's attention. So he crashed down the shaft, and shouted, for want of a more inspired remark:

"Old lady Maggie, sittin' on the fence,
Curlin' her hair with the monkey wrench."

Maggie rushed upon him, and the girls at

the rope above, with Nike's own able assistance, barely succeeded in hauling him past the opening in time to escape the long kitchen spoon, that came down with a loud whack on the edge of the waiter.

"Lave that lift alone, or Oi'll tell the landlord to send the magisthrate after ye," the cook called up the shaft, then slammed and bolted the door that gave entrance upon the kitchen.

Nike, however, having thoroughly enjoyed the ride in the waiter, was for trying it again, and he and Mamie took turns in rapid succession. They bumped down, and were hauled up by the painful exertions of the less venturesome spirits. Annie and Nancy each took a turn, but found the ride too thrilling to be entirely enjoyable. Finally, though, Nike and Mamie got into an argument as to how much they could lift, so they packed Annie and Samuel on the top shelf, with Nancy and Maudalia below, and set about measuring strength on the ropes. Nancy and Annie had petitioned not to be bumped down, so they were lowered with great ease, as specified in the contract, and then began the more arduous task of raising

them. Mamie pulled first, and moved them so slowly that Nike laughed in derision, and seizing the rope, gave it such a jerk that the waiter jumped up beyond the kitchen door and there stuck. Nike pulled and tugged, and then Mamie took a hand, but the waiter was unmovable.

"Hurry up!" called Nancy.

"Keep still," her brother ordered.

"Ain't you goin' to let us out?" Annie's muffled voice demanded.

"The rope's caught," said Nike.

"Don't be a cry-baby," Mamie called.

"It ain't me, it's Samuel," Annie answered faintly.

"How long we got to stay?" Nancy asked.

"Not long," called Mamie. "A man will have to come and fix the rope."

"We might die in here!" Nancy wailed.

Mamie looked at Nike. "You done it," she said.

"I did not — no more'n you," he answered.

Then by common consent they moved away, the howls of Samuel filling their ears as they ran. When they reached the front step Mamie said, "You wait here; I'm goin' to get Pop."

"He'll lick you," Nike warned her.

"Not me," said Mamie proudly; "an' we can't let 'em die in there."

She started out as she spoke, and Nike sat down on the front doorstep, but when she disappeared round the corner, he went rapidly home and took his regular place sedately on the stool by the fruit stand.

"Where is your sister and the children?" Mrs. Eli asked.

"Over to Mulligans," said Nike briefly, and began counting the cantaloupes by his side.

The same quiet, however, did not prevail at the Mulligans. The shrieks from the dumb waiter mounted even above the cook's wild song of lamentation in the kitchen. At last she went to the shaft, unfastened the door, and called out:

"Hould your tongue, or Oi'll sind for the magisthrate."

"Oh, Maggie, help us! We're stuck," cried Annie's shrill voice.

"Be it you, darlint?" cried the cook, whose heart was ever warm towards gentle little Annie.

"It's me an' Nancy, an' Samuel an'

Maudalia, an' we're stuck, an' Mamie an' Nike has left us," Annie called down.

Maggie was making a vigorous attempt to move the waiter. "Sure it's them as will answer for it at the judgmint," she said, between tugs at the rope.

"You think we're ever goin' to get out?" Annie asked.

"Sure you'll get out," said the cook, "if we have to take the roof off the house, an' raise you with a derrick, you'll get out."

This did not sound encouraging, and the children started to cry again.

"Ah, now, me darlints, quit blatherin' an' it's Maggie will pass up a bit of cake to ease yer feelin's."

The cry quieted down to an occasional snuffle, and Maggie, standing in the doorway, put four large, fat jumbles into the hand that Nancy reached down the shaft.

"Them will pacify ye, until I can get ye out," she said, and began working with the ropes again. "Mamie and that dhirty-faced boy will burn for doin' it," she commented, as she stopped to rest after her efforts.

The jumbles had been disposed of above, and sounds of unrest were beginning again,

when a firm hand was put on the rope in the dining room. Pat Mulligan had left his bar and come to the rescue. His laughter sounded good down in the dumb waiter, and in a few minutes he had the rope back in the pulley, and had lowered the children to the kitchen, where Maggie clasped Annie in her arms, and the little Elis shook themselves out, and stretched their legs. Pat looked at Mamie and laughed.

"You're as wild as any colleen in Con-naught," he said proudly.

"Nike helped me," said the truthful Mamie.

"Sure, an' I'll have the law on him for doin' it, hangin' up me little Annie in this way," Mulligan exclaimed with such sudden fierceness that Mamie saw that Nike had done well to absent himself.

"We had jumbles," said Annie, running lightly up the back stair. Mamie went to the dumb waiter shaft and called down, "I thought you said you didn't have nothin' to give us! Mean old story-teller!"

"Whisht!" said the cook, "'tis the pot spakin' to the kittle." And again she took up her song.

CHAPTER VII

Dr. Burnham Acquires a Real Patient, and Policy Ann Receives a Post Card

DR. MORTON had taken a fancy to Tom Burnham. He found something most attractive in the decisive, masculine personality, so oddly softened by a touch of poetry, or a flash of humor, and Burnham, feeling the poise and quiet strength of the older man, had gone so far as to ask his advice on one or two occasions. Altogether, as the summer passed, their acquaintance ripened into a friendship that meant much to them both.

One night in September, Burnham stopped at Dr. Morton's office to consult one of his books. The doctor sat by his desk reading, and Tom went to the shelf and selected his volume. As he replaced it, Dr. Morton dropped his pamphlet.

"I'm going away next week," he said.

"The rest will do you good," Burnham remarked.

"I don't feel the need of rest, but it's my custom to go in September, and that is always sufficient reason for me in such matters. The question now is about my practice — I want you to take it."

Burnham looked at him quickly. "You are very good, sir, but ——"

"But nothing," Dr. Morton interrupted him. "There are not many men I'd leave it to."

"I don't think I should take it," said Burnham. "I don't agree with you about the use of strychnine."

"My friend, if you agreed with me in all points, I shouldn't trust you."

Tom Burnham smiled, then he went to the window and looked out. At last he turned and said, "Thank you, doctor; I'll take it. I daresay I would have accepted without hesitation if it had not meant so much to me," he added frankly. "You'll give me a free hand, won't you?"

"With one suggestion. Remember when you enter a patient's house that you are there for one purpose — to do him good."

Dr. Morton came over and put his hand on Tom's shoulder as he spoke.

The younger man felt suddenly grave. "That's worthy of all acceptance, Doctor," he said.

"It's worth making into a law of professional life," the other amended, and Tom knew it for the secret of his friend's success.

"There's another point," said Dr. Morton, when he had given Burnham a list of his patients. "I'd like to prescribe a tonic for the physician in charge."

Tom moved uneasily. "I don't want a tonic," he exclaimed.

"You look gaunt, young man, and it's not becoming."

"I'm well enough," said Tom.

Dr. Morton looked at him a moment, but did not insist, for he suspected that Tom's trouble was beyond the reach of tonics, yet he had thought it well to make the suggestion.

"Where are you going?" Burnham asked, changing the subject after a pause.

"To Sandy Point."

"To Sandy Point," Tom echoed in surprise.

"Know anything about it?"

"I've heard of it," Burnham admitted, which was quite true, for Mrs. Eli had informed him that Phoebe was there.

"I thought possibly you knew something of the hotel. The Thornleys are there, I believe."

"I believe they are." Burnham's manner was noncommittal.

"I've met Miss Phoebe," Dr. Morton hazarded after a pause.

"Ah!" said Tom. "What did you think of her?"

"I think she'd make the sweetest wife a man could find."

Tom turned away again, and looked out of the window at the moonlit street, though he saw nothing of its lights and shadows as he stood listening to the friendly voice behind him.

"Shall I take a message to her?" Dr. Morton asked.

"No."

"Not a word from you?"

"She wouldn't care to hear it."

"May I use my judgment in speaking of you?"

Tom hesitated. "No," he said, finally.

"Suppose she does care?"

"She's going to marry that Englishman who was out here last winter."

There was silence in the room for a moment, then Burnham turned.

"It's all right," he said. "Those things hit a man rather hard at first, but I suppose they can be gotten over."

"I'm sorry I spoke of it," said Dr. Morton. "I thought there might be some foolish quarrel that was keeping you two apart."

"No, we had no quarrel," said Burnham.

Then they talked of the properties of strychnine, until Tom said good night, and left Dr. Morton standing in his office door. He looked after Tom for a moment, then he looked up at the moon and sighed, and when at last he went in and locked his office door he was humming softly:

"Do you remember Sweet
Alice, Ben Bolt?"

He sighed again when he came to the end of the familiar quatrain, and he stood silent by his desk for some time, thinking neither of Tom Burnham nor of Phoebe, nor yet of the properties of strychnine. Old memories

were with the doctor, while youth and love, elusive and fair, smiled sadly at him from the past. Burnham walked down the street, but did not take the turn that led to his lodgings. The night wind was cool, and movement seemed a necessity to him just then.

Next morning his restlessness had not left him, so he decided to go fishing. There was no particular stress of work to keep him in town, and he set off for the country with his rod and reel. His way led him past the establishment of the Eliathenes, and it occurred to him as he drew near, that it might not be a bad idea to take Nike along to dig for bait.

Aphronike was without, and when Burnham asked for Nike he smiled seraphically, and pointed over his shoulder to Nike's trousers, hanging conspicuously in the window.

"Is he sick?" asked Burnham.

Aphronike shook his head, and called loudly, "Nike!"

There was no response.

Again he called. From the inner depths

came a shuffling sound, and then Mrs. Eli's voice:

"'Tain't no use to hide yourself; step out when your Pa calls."

But Nike refused to step out. He appeared in the background, however, and the doctor saw the reason of his shyness. He had on an old plaid dress of Nancy's which failed to reach his stockings by several inches, and gave him a very Highland air indeed. Nike set the costume off by a heavy scowl, and altogether made a striking figure.

"What in thunder is the matter with him?" the doctor exclaimed, smothering a laugh.

"He don't try to take no care of his sisters and his little brother, like a boy ought to, an' so I put him in dresses," his mother explained. Nike faded away in the darkness of the back room, and the doctor remonstrated with Mrs. Eli.

"It don't do no good to argufy about Nike," she told him. "He ain't just ordinary bad." Then she told the story of what happened at the Mulligans. "Nobody don't know how I struggles with that child," she wound up. "'Tain't as though I had help,

neither, for the trainin' of the whole of 'em is right on me. George Eli don't pay no attention to 'em, lessen they happen to rile him in particular, an' they got too much sense to do that."

George Eli sat looking into space, and did not join in the conversation.

"At the same time, this will only make the boy worse," said Burnham.

"Well, sir, what am I to do? I'll own it makes me feel pitiful to see him settin' in the corner with them petticoats on, but you have to be right down hard-hearted when you got chil'ren to raise."

The doctor saw signs of yielding in Mrs. Eli, though, for all her vaunted hardness of heart, and it did not take him long to persuade her to let Nike return to his trousers and accompany him on his fishing expedition. Almost as the consent was given, a long arm reached out and secured the trousers, and in two minutes more Nike, having laid aside his tartan, emerged in modern attire and joined his benefactor. But it was not until they had left the trolley car that carried them into the woods, that he began to throw off the gloom which had en-

compassed him. Then, in a confidential moment, he said to the doctor:

"I wouldn't have done it if Mamie Mulligan hadn't been showin' off how much she could lif'."

The cool, moist earth of the woodland road felt as good to his feet as its shade was grateful to his eyes, and he was not disturbing himself with problems. Burnham found him an excellent companion for a fishing trip. He furnished society without conversation, and a sense of carefree enjoyment of life that was good for the spirits, and seemed in tune with the many sounds of wood and stream on that warm September morning. Besides this, Nike at once developed the ability to find a variety of large, fat worms that proved a bait irresistible to brook trout.

The doctor had a string of fine fish in his basket when they stopped by the farm to see Policiander on their way home. The little boy was practically well, but it had not been thought best for him to return to the city during the summer, and Mrs. Tippins had been only too eager to keep him. He ran out to meet the doctor and Nike, and in

a few minutes Mrs. Tippins also came to the door.

"Don't bring your fish basket in the house, doctor; it will drip on the floor," she said.

"Mr. Tippins always hangs his on that nail," Policiander told him.

"Ain't he a sensible child!" Mrs. Tippins exclaimed in an undertone to the doctor. Then she said aloud, "Don't try to instruct your elders."

Policiander did not hear, however, for he was looking in the basket at the fish, and Nike was telling how each had been caught, and with what sort of worms.

"I'm glad you came in, doctor, for there's something on my mind to ask you," said Mrs. Tippins. Then she led Burnham into the kitchen, and at once took advantage of their being alone.

"Do you think it's goin' to be best for that child to go home next month?" she asked.

"Well, it will all depend upon the weather," the doctor answered.

"Weather or no weather, what's to prevent his comin' down sick again?" she questioned sharply.

"Nothing, except that he is cured."

Mrs. Tippins snorted contemptuously. "There's other things he can get besides what he's had, an' between you an' me, I believe his ailment was not gettin' enough to eat."

"What are you driving at, Mrs. Tippins?" the doctor asked.

Mrs. Tippins came to the point immediately. "Well, sir, the long an' the short of it is, that me and Mr. Tippins wants to adopt Policy Ann. He's a biddable child, an' that careful about mud an' such things, you'd think he'd had a better up-bringin'. The great trouble, of course, will be with his parents."

"Have you seen Aphronike, his father?" Burnham asked.

"That's just it," Mrs. Tippins agreed; "I thought maybe you would speak to him about the matter for me, for I'll admit he do seem to set store on the child."

"So much so, that I will not be the man to make your suggestion to him. Send Mr. Tippins."

She made a contemptuous exclamation. "What would be the good of that? Tippins

couldn't persuade a Gentile, let alone a fur-riner."

"I think Mrs. Eli also might be an obstacle in the way of carrying out your plan," said Burnham.

"I daresay," Mrs. Tippins agreed with a sigh. "Still, Mis' Eli is not one to deny that children has got to eat, and sometimes it must be hard for her to see how they are goin' to manage it, with six mouths to feed, not to speak of Mr. Eli's, which, judgin' by the size of him, must be equal to two more."

"What does Policiander think of it?"

"I ain't breathed a word of it to him yet," she whispered. "To tell the truth, I'm scared. It seems like I couldn't bear to hear him turn me down."

"Shall I find out for you?" Burnham asked.

Mrs. Tippins had only time to give her assent, when the boy came in. The doctor lifted him to his knee. "Who made your pretty blue shirt?" he asked.

"Mis' Tippins," answered the little fellow promptly.

"She's very good to you, I think," said Burnham.

"Yes, sir, she is," said Policiander, "an' so is Mr. Tippins."

"Why, you'll not want to go away!" Burnham exclaimed.

"No, not ever, if my father, and my mother, and Nike, and Nancy, and Samuel, and Maudalia was here."

"Do you miss them so much?"

"They are my fam'ly," Policiander answered simply. "Everybody misses their fam'ly."

"But aren't Mr. and Mrs. Tippins as good as family?"

"Mr. Tippins is my friend," Policiander declared, "and Mis' Tippins is my friend."

Burnham looked at Mrs. Tippins, who turned her back and rearranged the pans on the shelf over the table, while Policiander went on sorting his acquaintances.

"And you are my doctor friend, and Miss Phoebe is my prettiest friend."

This last assertion startled Burnham. He envied Policiander his frankness, if nothing more.

"She sent me a picture," the child declared, and running to the dresser he brought a postcard for the doctor to see. It

was a view of the beach at Sandy Point, but it was not the picture that engrossed Burnham's attention. He had never before seen Phoebe's writing, and he at once discovered in its marvelous twists and dashes something quite typical of her charm.

"Can you read it?" Policiander asked.

"Can't you?" the doctor returned.

"I can read my name on the front, and Mis' Tippins can read her name at the bottom, but Mis' Tippins says she can't read new-fashioned writin'."

"What I said was, that it's seldom the writers of it can read it themselves," Mrs. Tippins corrected, as she went to the dairy.

The doctor puzzled over Phoebe's message for a moment, and then read, "I wish you were here to play on this beautiful beach." He found the brevity of this communication most disappointing. Policiander was satisfied, however. He looked at the picture with renewed interest.

"Do you suppose she plays there?" he asked.

Tom Burnham looked at the view as intently as did his companion. "I daresay she walks there," he said.

"And sits on the sand," Policiander suggested. Tom thought she did.

"When is Miss Phoebe goin' to marry you?" Policiander asked suddenly.

Burnham started. "You must not ask such questions," he said, sharply.

"Mis' Tippins told me she was goin' to," the child explained.

"Miss Phoebe is going to marry some one else," said Burnham.

"Oh, I'm so sorry!" cried Policiander. "She don't love nobody like she do you."

"Be quiet, Policiander," Tom ordered, severely.

The child looked up at him wondering. Burnham put him down, and standing by the window for a while he watched Nike sliding down a haystack out in the field. At last he turned, and sitting down, again took Policiander on his knee and began to talk to him gravely.

"You must never, never again say what you said to me just now about Miss Phoebe — she wouldn't like it — and you may, only this once, tell me why you said it," he finished lamely.

"I don't know why I said it." Policiander hung his head.

"Oh, come now, you must know," the doctor insisted. "Did she — er — ever talk about me?"

"Yes, sir. She told me to mind all you said to do."

"Anything else?"

"I think so," he answered, but doubtfully.

"Think hard." Tom could hear Mrs. Tippins in the passage. "Tell me one thing she said," he urged.

"I can't remember nothin' so quick," Policiander complained, and the entrance of Mrs. Tippins closed the conversation.

When the doctor and Nike left shortly afterwards, however, Policiander went down to the gate with them, and standing on the highest bar he leaned over and said, "I remember somethin' now." Nike was going on ahead, and Tom said, "What is it?" with unfeigned eagerness.

"She said you was stronger than Mr. Tippins," the little boy announced proudly, and was not prepared for the look of disappointment that came over the doctor's face.

CHAPTER VIII

The House of Eli Seeks Recreation,
and Dr. Morton Appears
in the Role of
Providence

SEPTEMBER was never a season of prosperity with the Eliathenes family, for the reason that all of Mrs. Eli's customers were generally out of town.

"I ain't found out yet how we manage to get through it every year," she told one of her friends, "because business ain't so brisk with George Eli neither. Of course, though, I don't fret about it, and somethin' usually shoves us along. Last September I got that job sellin' tickets to the movin'-picture show. It's a good thing it ain't but thirty days to the month, though, or we couldn't pull through."

Mrs. Eli was ripping an old skirt while she talked, for, as she often said, September

was her "makin'-over month"—the season when she contrived garments for the children from the various pieces of clothing that had been given to her from time to time. As for herself, she wore anything that was convenient, her main requirement in clothes being that they should cover. She cut old things over for the children with real cleverness, however, and called their clothes always by the name of the giver of the original article. Samuel's Sunday suit was always spoken of as "old Mis' Jenkinson's shawl," and Nancy's favorite dress was distinguished as "Miss Lucy Andrews' petticoat."

"It's no use givin' a material that's got an up an' a down, and a wrong an' a right to the poor, particularly when it's cut up in gores," she said, as she surveyed the pieces into which she had resolved one of Phoebe's skirts.

"There's scarcely anything I can get out of these except pants, an' this potato-vine pattern wouldn't look good runnin' up a pants leg. The truth is, I wouldn't try to make it up, if it wasn't to keep from hurtin' Miss Phoebe's feelin's. Her things is kind

of hard to make use of. Last winter she give me a pale blue broadcloth, then come along a yellor crêpe d' chine, an' now it's this here potato-vine challie. Of course her clothes is as good as cash. I wouldn't have no trouble at all in disposin' of 'em, for there's a young lady I know is ready an' anxious to take anything she gives me offen my hands, but Miss Phoebe likes me to use 'em for the children, an' sometimes it's quite strainin' to find a way to do it. Old Miss Jenkinson is really more help to me in the matter of clo'es, though I wouldn't let Miss Phoebe know it for the world, for there ain't another like her in six states."

Mrs. Eli was twisting patterns and cloth as she talked, and at last took up her scissors.

"It'll have to be a sack for Maudalia," she declared, "there ain't enough of it for anything else."

Nancy came in at that moment and raised a wailing cry. "What did you cut up Miss Phoebe's dress for? I wanted to wear it to the fireman's picnic."

Mrs. Eli threw down the scissors. "Now wouldn't you've made a figger. Miss

Phoebe's dress trailin' 'roun' you, an' you ain't got a petticoat below your knees. I'm most sorry your Pa was give them tickets to the picnic, for you have kep' up such a talkin' about it till I'm pretty near crazy."

"You're goin', though, ain't you?" asked Nancy in alarm.

"Yes, I'm goin' because it ain't everyone gets invited, an' it's best to take advantage of such things, but I don't want to hear no more about what you're goin' to wear, an' what you ain't goin' to wear. You know as good as me there ain't nothin' for you to put on but Miss Jenkinson's brown calico, an' you better be thankful to get that."

Nancy, however, was not the only one of the family who was giving consideration to her toilet. Aphronike also planned to make an effect. He arose early on the morning of the firemen's picnic, and set Nike to the task of polishing his tan shoes. He had purchased a new purple necktie, and had secured the evening before a red rosebud from a convenient, low-walled garden in the vicinity of his residence, and when he finally set forth he was surveyed with pride by his wife and children, who stopped

in their own preparations to see him stroll off down the street, puffing his cigarette with a languorous air that gave the finishing touch to his elegance.

"Pa's goin'!" Nancy called.

Mrs. Eli gave another scrub to Samuel's face and ran to the window.

"Your Pa is certainly stylish-lookin' when he fixes up," she said, following Aphronike's heavy though pliant figure with admiration. "We'll be there before long," she called.

Aphronike turned and waved his hand, but made no response. He had given the tickets to his wife, as his friend, Demetri Zinnias, had suggested, but there his concern in the matter ended. He intended going to the picnic quite unattached.

"Where did he get that rosebud?" Mrs. Eli asked of Nancy.

"He picked it out of Miss Jones's garden las' night; I seen him," said Nancy. "Miss Jones she didn't care, though," she added.

"No, I don't reckon so, an' it certainly do set him off well," Mrs. Eli admitted, returning to Samuel with her customary energy.

"It's too bad you can't go, Nike," she exclaimed, as they started off.

Nike grinned. He had been left in charge of the fruit stand for the day.

"I reckon, though, you'd be gettin' into trouble, drownin' an' so on, so it's maybe just as well for you to stay here."

"Come on, Ma, the boat will go off an' leave us," Nancy cried. She had Maudalia in her arms, and Mrs. Eli picked up Samuel. He was a heavy lift, but she balanced him on her hip, and both she and Nancy made fair progress, considering their impedimenta.

Aphronike saw them from his vantage point on the deck of the river steamer, and indicated them to his friend.

"They will arrive," said Zinnias, and they did, breathless, but several minutes to the good.

Nancy had had no idea that a picnic would have the accompaniment of a band — and such a band. It blew and thumped, and thumped and blew, with scarcely an intermission, for a long, delightful day, and far into an enchanted night.

The crowd sat upon camp stools wedged together upon the deck. Maudalia cried once, and Samuel announced several times, "I want ——" but Nancy always called out,

"Hush, you're on the picnic," and he was silenced by her enthusiasm. It was not until they had disembarked at the island, the point of destination, that the Mulligans were revealed.

"I'm sorry to see them," Mrs. Eli declared, but Nancy did not hear her; she and the Mulligans were already in conjunction.

"Take Samuel," her mother called. Nancy sighed, but came back for her charge, remembering that she was blest in being relieved of Maudalia.

"Picnics ain't nothin' to me," Mamie Mulligan declared. "I was to the Royal Knights o' Jerusalem picnic last month."

"An' then we was on the Society o' United Barkeepers' boat ride," Annie reminded her.

"We got a shoe box full of lunch," Nancy boasted.

"Annie's got some lunch too. Maggie give it to her," said Mamie.

"Who is that boy over yonder?" Nancy asked suddenly.

Mamie laughed. "Don't know your own brother." Nancy stood petrified, for she was obliged to see that it was indeed Nike.

He came over to them when Mamie called him.

"You thought you was the only one could go on a picnic," he said to Nancy with a grin.

"I'm goin' to tell Pa," she cried.

"I don't care. Mr. Zinnias give me a ticket."

Mrs. Eli had caught sight of Nike too, and came over to them in amazement. "Ain't you shamed of yourself, sneakin' off like this, when we thought you was keepin' the fruit stand like a young man."

Nike hung his head and repeated, "Mr. Zinnias give me a ticket."

"It ain't the ticket I'm thinkin' about," his mother said, "It's them mus'melons an' peaches. What you done with 'em?"

"I locked 'em up in the house as soon as you'd all gone," said Nike, fishing in his pocket for the key.

"Ten to one they'll all be sof' to-morrow, an' that's a dead loss. But it's always the way in the fruit-sellin' business; everything you save turns sof' on your hands," she explained to a friend with whom she had been walking.

"It's free lemonade over yonder," Nike volunteered, by way of making himself pleasant.

"Well, I'll declare! Show us where it is," Mrs. Eli ordered, and the party followed Nike's lead to the pavilion, where the lemonade barrel was drawing an ever increasing crowd.

"Each one must get it for 'emselves, 'cause they count up on you," said Nike, who had already been told that he was not expected to carry down the entire barreland.

Despite the softening fruit at home, Mrs. Eli was glad in her heart that Nike had come, for it was a beautiful day. The river leaped in the sun, and the breeze stole gently in among the willows and rushes, fanning the perspiring brows of revelers, while the band thumped on, and the free lemonade was freely imbibed by a thirsty crowd.

The stars were shining when the firemen's picnic steamed homeward. The children had seen them come out, one by one, to join the new moon that hung in the western sky. They were all tired. Even Nike was subdued, and Mamie Mulligan seemed almost as quiet as little Annie, who had

fallen asleep, leaning heavily against Mrs. Eli. Aphronike, the magnificent, made one of the family group, his jaunty air departed, the red rose withered upon the lapel of his coat. All were contented in the remembrance of a happy day.

"It's only one thing I wish," Nancy told her mother as she went to bed. "I wish Miss Phoebe could have went with us."

"Don't you trouble about Miss Phoebe, she's goin' to hops an' such things as gay as a bird," Mrs. Eli declared.

Phoebe was indeed taking part in the usual festivities of a summer hotel, but she was very far from being gay, if that is a state of the heart. She was vivacious and interested, as occasion required, yet at times a suggestion of sadness lay in her eyes, or spoke in some momentary and unguarded lassitude of manner. Such trifles passed unnoticed by her casual friends, and she felt that her unhappiness was concealed by a very adequate semblance of content. She had not counted upon the keen observation that was to be brought to bear upon her by the coming of Dr. Morton.

Phoebe's acquaintance with the doctor was not of very long standing, and she was rather surprised when he joined her on the sands the morning after his arrival. He was a man of reputation, however, and with such charming simplicity of manner that she was pleased he should wish to talk to her — quite regardless of the subdued excitement that she felt when she remembered that Tom Burnham knew him too. Perhaps if she had known the extent of his friendship for Burnham, and of his consequent interest in her, she would not have been so natural, nor so open to the doctor's quick understanding.

"There seems to be a good deal of gayety at the hotel," said Dr. Morton, to whom gayety meant loss of sleep.

"You came at a bad time. We shall be delightfully quiet now until the week end."

"You should leave it to us old men to talk of delightful quiet," he told her.

"I sometimes think that young people love quiet more than old ones," she said.

"Possibly old people want to get away from their troubles."

"And young ones to consider theirs?"

"Perhaps. Youth is intemperate in most things."

She looked at him quickly. "I am beginning to think that youth isn't so desirable after all, just on account of that intemperance. How is it to be gotten over?"

"I don't believe anyone has ever answered that. It is one of the problems that solve themselves — Time works them out in some sort of fashion. 'Youth waneth by increasing,'" he reminded her.

She laughed, yet fell into a meditative silence. Presently she changed the subject, but the doctor felt that he had made a discovery on that morning stroll by the shore. Phoebe might not care for Burnham, but she was certainly not engaged to anyone else, or, if she were, she was not happy in that engagement. They met often in the days that followed, and each found in the other that sympathetic response to unspoken need, which makes itself felt with such surety when natures are attuned.

"I wish the little Eliathenes could enjoy this nice air, and sand, and sunlight," she exclaimed one morning, as a group of boys and girls scampered past them.

"Are those the children of the Greek fruit-seller?" Dr. Morton asked.

"Yes," she answered. "You must have heard of Policiander. He was the little fellow who took the sunbaths.

"I remember going out to see him with Burnham," the doctor said. It was the first time that he had mentioned Tom's name, and he was interested to see how she would receive it.

"Don't you think Dr. Burnham treated the case very cleverly?" she asked.

"Well, I don't know. Such treatment is rather unusual, but there is nothing particularly original about the idea."

Her face fell a little, or so Dr. Morton fancied. "I don't believe he claimed that it was original, but he certainly carried it out very well," she said.

"Yes, he did," the doctor admitted, and then added, "He is apt to be thorough in most things."

She was silent, and after a pause Dr. Morton asked, "Do you know him very well?"

"I saw a good deal of him at one time," she answered evasively. "I thought him quite agreeable."

"He is more than that, for he has both brains and character."

"Yes," said Phoebe slowly, "I think he has, but——"

"But what? Why does he fail to find favor?" Dr. Morton asked.

"I don't know that I quite understand him," said Phoebe. Her eyes were fixed on the ocean, and the doctor wondered if she would decide to be confidential.

"He doesn't seem to me such an enigma," he said at last.

"He has behaved rather oddly to me," Phoebe said.

"In what way?"

"Oh, it was just a trifle," she said, and though Dr. Morton thought he detected in her a wish to discuss Burnham and his behavior at greater length, he could think of no remark that might induce her to speak. At length he said, "He's looking after my practice for me while I am out of town."

Phoebe turned to him in surprise. "Is he really? What a splendid thing for him. I think he's sure to succeed sooner or later, don't you?"

"If he has the proper incentive, yes."

"What is the proper incentive?"

"It differs with different men. With Burnham I think it would be a happy marriage."

She hesitated, startled. "Is there — do you — is he engaged to anyone?"

"No, but I'm quite sure that he'd like to be," said the doctor, and he was so occupied in determining whether he had betrayed Tom's confidence that he did not see until afterwards that he had not made his meaning entirely clear to Phoebe.

"Oh!" she said, and then rather meditatively, "That probably explains his behavior."

"Of course," the doctor agreed.

"You must know him very well," Phoebe commented after a pause.

"I stumbled upon his secret, and I'm afraid I should not have told it to you."

"Why, there is nothing very unusual about it," she said.

"No—o," said the doctor, but he looked puzzled.

That afternoon her meaning flashed upon him. "I didn't make it clear that she's the one he wants to be engaged to," he said to

himself, and then he paced the piazza in meditation.

It was a dance night at the hotel, and he could not hope for another immediate opportunity of talking with her. Chance gave it to him, however, that very evening, when Phoebe went out on the piazza, and an attentive young man had gone for her wrap.

Dr. Morton leaned over her chair and said, "I'm afraid you misunderstood me this morning — about Burnham, I mean."

"How misunderstood you?" asked Phoebe, without looking up.

"There's only one girl — he's always cared for the same one — bless my soul, my dear, I promised him to leave his affairs alone, and I'm afraid I have muddled them very badly."

Phoebe laughed and the doctor thought he knew the meaning of the joyousness in her voice.

"Nice old chap, Dr. Morton," her escort commented as they strolled away.

"He's a darling," said Phoebe, and then she seemed preoccupied for a time.

CHAPTER IX

Dr. Burnham Begins to See and an
Umbrella Does the Rest

TOM BURNHAM put his best powers at the service of Dr. Morton's patients, and had a theory or two of his own as to their ailments when his friend came back.

"You've got the wrong idea about McDougal," he declared.

Dr. Morton smiled. It had been some years since his ideas had been disputed. "What do you think is the matter with him?"

Tom looked up quickly. "I don't question your diagnosis — it's the treatment. You are not doing him any harm, of course, but I could cure him."

"Why didn't you change the treatment, then? I agreed you should have a free hand."

"I didn't like to do anything radical. Be-

sides, McDougal was rather doubtful about being turned over to me — it seemed to be little his case. He says he's been a patient of yours for ten years, and he gave me points on all your prescriptions."

"I'm not anxious for him to die a patient of mine," said Dr. Morton. "What do you want to do for him?"

Burnham explained his views. "It's a complicated case, and I must say I'm interested in spite of McDougal himself. How have you stood the man's conversation for ten years?"

"You have to get your second wind, so to speak, with McDougal," said Dr. Morton, smiling.

The list of patients was a long one, and Tom's report ran into details. When he had finished, Dr. Morton said, "On the whole, you think you have succeeded."

Burnham hesitated. "Yes, I think I have," he said at length. "I've done the best I could, anyway, and I don't feel uncomfortable about any of them."

"That's a great deal to say," the older man remarked. "How did the patients take to you?"

"Fairly well. I shouldn't say they were enthusiastic. Still, they seemed to have confidence in me — that is, all of them except McDougal."

Dr. Morton made no comment. He was evidently meditating something of importance. At last he spoke abruptly. "I need an assistant, Burnham."

"Now, you know you don't need anything of the kind," Burnham answered, quickly.

"Well, I want one, which amounts to the same thing. I've wanted one for several years, but I've never found the man before."

"You'd quarrel with me in a week," said Tom.

"You mean you would quarrel with me. I like some of your ideas, though, and I'm willing to take the risk."

"Suppose we happen to differ on a case," Tom suggested.

"Well, if your ideas were sensible, I might let you try them — if mine had failed. You could take McDougal, for instance, and make an example of him." There was a twinkle of fun in Dr. Morton's eye, but Tom did not smile.

"To be frank with you," the doctor went

on, "I want you to take the less serious cases off my hands — convalescents and chronics."

"They are very uninteresting," Tom demurred.

"They are — I won't dispute it."

"Don't misunderstand me, Doctor. Association with you would mean a great deal to me, but I don't know that I'd shine as an assistant," said Tom.

"I should never ask any man to act contrary to his conscience. If you didn't feel that you could carry out my ideas in any instance, I'd carry them out myself," the doctor told him.

"Let me think it over," said Tom.

"Very well," the other agreed. He had not expected that Burnham would seize upon the proposition, and liked him all the better for his pride.

So far their talk had not approached Phoebe, and Dr. Morton was determined that he would not give his news of her unsolicited, so he said nothing on the subject, and Tom was at last constrained to lead up to it himself, though with caution. "How did you find the hotel at Sandy Point?" he began.

"Excellent — first-class cooking, baths, electricity, good service, well conducted. Tremendous place. The proprietor told me it was built by ——"

"Many people?" Tom broke in.

"Crowded. People there from all over the country — Chicago, Louisville — one man there from San Francisco."

"Much gayety?"

"Considerable — hops on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Needless to say, though, I didn't take part. Now when I was young ——"

Burnham felt desperate. "Excuse me, Doctor, but did you see Miss Thornley?" he asked.

"Of course I saw her. Furthermore, we talked about you quite often."

Tom's pulse quickened. "I thought I asked you ——"

"It was in connection with your treatment of the little Greek boy that you came under discussion."

"Oh!" said Tom, and he had to own to a sense of disappointment.

"She has a very high estimate of your professional ability."

"Did she say anything else?" he asked, eagerly.

"She said you had behaved rather peculiarly to her."

"I behaved peculiarly!" said Tom. "I behaved peculiarly!"

"I don't know anything about it," said the doctor, "for she also said it was too trifling a matter to be discussed."

"I wish you had discussed it, just the same," said Tom.

"How could I discuss your affairs, my dear boy, when you had refused me permission to do so?"

"You might have hinted around at it, and found out what she meant," said Tom.

"I did, but she wouldn't tell. Why don't you ask her yourself?"

"Because she gave me to understand that she didn't wish to see me."

"That's where you made a tremendous mistake," Dr. Morton told him.

"How do you know?"

The doctor hesitated. "I — she — that is, I gathered so."

"You mean you imagine so. She's engaged to some one else," said Tom.

"No, she isn't."

"How do you know?" the young man asked again.

"Well," said the doctor lamely, "she didn't seem to be."

"Didn't she seem happy?"

"Not at all. Not until the last, when I told her about you."

Tom jumped up. "What in thunder did you tell her about me?"

"Nothing — nothing, just the most casual reference."

"I asked you not to talk about me," said Tom.

"My dear fellow, I didn't enlarge upon you. Indeed, I had no intention of telling her, but it all came about very naturally."

Tom said nothing.

"You see, she was so interested in hearing of you that I was led on to say more than I meant to say."

"No doubt."

"But there's no harm done, absolutely none," the doctor declared.

"What did you say?" Tom asked, shortly.

"I just told her — I forget my exact words."

"And how did she take it?"

"She laughed," the doctor said, blandly.

Tom picked up his hat. "Good night," he said, briefly.

Dr. Morton put his hand on the young man's shoulder. "If you had heard her laugh, you would forgive me for my bungling."

There was silence in the office for a moment. Then Tom said, "That's all right, Doctor; I'm much obliged for the interest you've taken in me."

"You look so," Dr. Morton remarked, but the situation was relieved, and Tom went off to meditate upon his friend's observations.

He thought of many things that he might say to Phoebe, and went over in his mind many imaginary meetings, yet when he should actually encounter her, he was aware that he would have to depend for guidance upon the inspiration of the moment. She was sweet because she was spontaneous, and conversation with her could not be thought out beforehand.

This he discovered in a moment, as they stood together by Mrs. Eliathenes' stove on

a gray October afternoon. Phoebe had just come home, and her healthy color and roundness of contour testified to the benefits of a "sea change." She had brought gifts for the Eliathenes household, of which Policiander was once more a member. To him she had given a wonderful collection of shells accumulated in her strolls along the shore, and nothing could have pleased the child half as much. Phoebe told him that he might hear the ocean echoing in them, and he sat on the floor entranced, with a conch pressed to his ear, and his face lit by the fancies that ran through his brain.

Nancy had a pretty ribbon, and she at once repaired to the cracked mirror in the back room, where she tried to tie what she called "stick up bows" on the top of her head, such as the Mulligans affected. Samuel and Maudalia had toys, and Nike caressed a football with a smile of pure contentment on his face.

"It looks just like Christmas," said Mrs. Eli, smoothing the warm muffler that Phoebe had brought to her. "I declare, Miss Phoebe, you're gettin' right down fleshy. I doubt if them dresses I made you

last spring can meet on you." Mrs. Eli noted the pretty curves of Phoebe's figure with a trained eye.

"I have gained a good deal," said Phoebe, uneasily.

"Don't you worry about it. You was just a little bit stringy for my taste before you went away. And now, I suppose, you'll be mighty busy gettin' your things ready."

"Ready for what?" asked Phoebe.

Mrs. Eliathenes smiled broadly. "It's all over town that you're goin' to England to live."

"Why to England?"

"Now don't you try to make out like you don't know, Miss Phoebe, when your intended is a genuine Englishman. They did say you was to be married in the summer, but I says to Dr. Burnham, I says, 'she'll wait till fall on account of the clo'es'."

"Had he heard it too?" Phoebe asked.

"Well, that I can't say. He didn't seem to be in no way surprised. Doctor's deep; you can't make out what he knows, an' what he don't know, but sometimes I think he's gettin' sort o' peculiar. It was the same day I was tellin' him about your weddin', an'

we was discussin' your young man, an' so on, an' mind you now, Doctor had asked me about the chil'ren, an' bless goodness, if he didn't gone off before I had time to switch around to a swellin' Samuel had on his leg. As it turned out, it wasn't nothin' in partikler, but it might 'a' bin."

"Maybe he had an appointment to keep," Phoebe suggested.

"Maybe so, but all I says is, it seemed peculiar, an' I don't believe Doctor is goin' to make no stir in this world, as long as he acts so forgetful. Of course, this wasn't nobody but Samuel, an' it wasn't nothin' but a swellin', but if it had been the president of the United States, I don't think he would have done no different."

Phoebe laughed. "He seems to be very much interested in the children," she said.

"He is that, Miss Phoebe, an' a kinder young man than Dr. Burnham I have never met with in my time. Of course, what I spoke of about Samuel has never crossed my lips before. I'm talkin' to you, knowin' you to be Doctor's friend, about his prospec's in life, for it ain't no one that walks this earth, let alone your own self, Miss Phoebe, who's

bin kinder to me. Doctor's got a heart of gold, an' there's no one I'd rather see rollin' in his own carriage, or ottomobile, if he prefers it, but all I says is, that judgin' by the way he done about Samuel that day, I don't look to see him ridin' in nothin' more than a street car for some time to come."

"I'm sure he treated Policiander wonderfully," Phoebe reminded her.

"Yes, ma'am, he certainly done so," Mrs. Eli agreed, "an' I take pride in sayin' it to all my friends, but that was some time ago, Miss Phoebe, an' what I say now is he's gettin' peculiar — seems like somethin' is on his mind."

"How does he look?" asked Phoebe, anxiously.

"Like one of these here Johnny-crook-horses. He ain't got a piece of meat left on him."

"Has he been sick?"

"Not much. You ought to see him get over the ground," Mrs. Eli suddenly lowered her voice. "Blessed if he ain't to the door!"

Phoebe listened for a breathless moment.

Sure enough, Burnham was heard challenging Aphronike at his post by the fruit stand.

"He's come to see Policiander," Mrs. Eliathenes explained. "The chile just come home yesterday, an' he told me he would come around an' give him a look over to-day or to-morrer." She opened the door as she spoke, and ushered in the doctor. "It's good comp'ny in here," she announced.

Tom had not expected to be confronted by Phoebe, and he bowed stiffly. He hoped that she had enjoyed her trip. Phoebe told him that she had. He trusted that her health was good, and she assured him that she felt perfectly well.

"She don't look like she done before she went away. I was tellin' Doctor how po'ly you seemed to be last spring, an' now it's him that's lookin' bad.

"Ain't he fell off?" Mrs. Eli demanded. The doctor shifted his position uncomfortably.

"I daresay it has been very hot in the city," said Phoebe.

"Moderately so," Burnham replied.

The situation was growing quite desperate when Nancy came in to ask directions about

tying the "stick up" bows. Mrs. Eli was horrified that the new hair ribbon should have been put to use at once, but Phoebe tied the bows herself, while Burnham watched her deft fingers in delight, and Nancy's face glowed with pleasure at the thought of the wonderful and stylish "stick-ups" that were being constructed on the top of her head. She had a great deal to say about the hair ribbons that Annie Mulligan wore. Her remarks did as well as any others, and left Phoebe and Burnham free to realize each other's nearness.

At last Mrs. Eliathenes said, "Doctor, I 'spose you've come to see Policy Ann."

"That's so," Tom exclaimed. "Yes, of course," and he stooped down by the boy as he sat still playing with his shells. Mrs. Eli threw a meaning look at Phoebe, bidding her notice this new instance of the doctor's forgetfulness.

"Ain't you glad Miss Phoebe's come back?" asked Policiander softly, as he listened once more to the sound of the waves.

Tom's answer was not heard for the clatter of the shells that he was turning over, and Phoebe moved to go.

"Have you an umbrella, Miss Thornley?" asked Burnham, rising quickly.

"An umbrella? No. Is it raining?" said Phoebe.

"Well, I'll declare! it's drizzlin' right hard," Mrs. Eli exclaimed.

"You must let me take you home," said Tom, unfurling his own umbrella as he spoke.

Phoebe said she hated to trouble him, but he reassured her eagerly, and together they set out, leaving Mrs. Eliathenes looking after them from her doorway.

"Here it is again," she said to herself, uneasily. "He come here to see Policy Ann, an' he ain't so much as asked after his health." She shook her head over the doctor's peculiar mental state, and went back into the house after her two friends were out of sight.

Phoebe said the rain was unexpected. Burnham told her he had been looking for it ever since morning, and then words failed them.

"I have had the pleasure of seeing a great deal of your friend, Dr. Morton," said Phoebe, after a pause.

"Yes, he told me," said Burnham.

She wondered what he had told. Indeed the mention of Dr. Morton made them both rather uneasy, for each felt uncertain as to the extent of his revelations, and it was as well that a sudden gust of wind made it unnecessary to pursue the subject further. The umbrella was almost turned inside out, and Tom had to hold Phoebe's arm to steady her. It was but for a moment, but that moment thrilled him, and she paid tribute in her heart to the strength of his arm.

"I ought to have made you stay at the Eli's, and gotten something for you to ride in. I had no idea it was as bad as this," said Burnham.

Phoebe told him she didn't mind rain, and then they were silent again, until at last he said bluntly, "What did you mean when you told Dr. Morton that I had behaved strangely to you?"

Phoebe hesitated. "If you don't consider your behavior unusual, I am afraid we don't look at those things in the same way."

"What could I do but accept your decision?" he demanded. "I had no intention of

forcing myself upon you if you wished to end our acquaintance."

"What are you talking about, Dr. Burnham?"

"I'll tell you, if you have forgotten," he said, and went through the recital of his wrongs. When he had finished she was silent.

"Of course," he said, after a moment, "I don't ask you for an explanation. I understood what you meant then, and I do now, only I won't say I enjoyed your method of telling me."

She looked up at him reproachfully. "Is that your estimate of me? Do you think me capable of so much rudeness and so little good feeling?"

"I had to think it," he said, doggedly, yet he saw suddenly that his position was indefensible.

"I wouldn't treat the barest acquaintance as you thought I treated you, and you and I were friends," said Phoebe, accusingly.

He couldn't answer her, for despair seized upon him as he walked at her side, and the dripping of the rain filled the silence. "Can you ever forgive me?" he asked at last.

Phoebe's aspect was severe, and he hurried on to the statement of the only extenuating circumstance. "I couldn't blame you for preferring Humphries, for in spite of myself I could see that he was a nice fellow. Besides, he could offer you so much, and I so little."

"If you mean that I choose my friends on account of their pecuniary advantages, you are mistaken," said Phoebe.

"I mean that I couldn't ask you to be a poor man's wife," Tom answered, quickly.

Then a long silence fell, mournful, with the ceaseless murmur of the rain.

At last Phoebe said, "A poor man would have to think very poorly indeed of the woman he wanted to marry, to let his poverty stand in the way of asking her."

"Tell me one thing," said Tom, earnestly; "are you engaged to that Englishman?" She looked at him and shook her head.

"Then won't you be engaged to me?" he pleaded.

"Are you any richer than you used to be?"

"Not much."

"Then how can you bring yourself to ask such a thing?"

"Because I want you so desperately."

"I'm getting wet," said Phoebe, which was quite true, for in his excitement Tom had let the umbrella slip back over his shoulder. He raised it in consternation. "If you could only take my arm, I'd manage a great deal better," he said.

"Well, I couldn't," she declared.

"Do you mean that you wouldn't?"

Phoebe's smile was tantalizing. "I would if I could."

"Don't be cruel," he begged. "Are you going to marry me, Phoebe?"

"Yes, I think I shall," she answered, and another gust of wind drove her nearer to his side.

He lowered the umbrella to ward off the driving rain, and again his strong arm steadied her before the blast.

"I wish there were not any houses on this street," he said.

"Or any people in them," she added.

CHAPTER X

The Elis Become "Carriage Folks,"
and Nancy Is Thrilled by
Orange Blossoms

MRS. ELI was speechless with astonishment when she heard of Phoebe's engagement to Dr. Burnham.

"You could 'a' knocked me over with a feather," she declared to Mrs. Tippins, who had stopped in for a look at Policiander. "To think o' me talkin' to him about her intended bein' that furrin Englishman, an' Doctor just wastin' away before my very eyes with wishin' to be her intended hisself. An' then, speakin' of him to Miss Phoebe as bein' a Johnny-crook-horse, an' all such as that."

"You didn't suspec' nothin'?"

"Not a thing. You see, Doctor is deep, an' I ain't never been one to make out what men is aimin' at. Some has got a gif' that

way, but I don't lay claim to no second sight in dealin' with 'em."

"An' he didn't talk about her none, Mis' Eli?"

"Yes, ma'am, he didn't talk about nothin' else scarcely, but it was just like he might of spoke of you, or Mr. Tippins, an' he didn't show no feelin' that I can remember when I spoken of Miss Phoebe's supposed intended, an' her probably gettin' married this fall, an' so forth."

"Men is peculiar," said Mrs. Tippins.

"Ain't it so!" exclaimed Mrs. Eliathenes.

"But you didn't ketch on to Miss Phoebe's feelin's neither," Mrs. Tippins reminded her.

"Well, there ain't nothin' strange in that," said Mrs. Eli, "for of course, Miss Phoebe couldn't of had much feelin's before Doctor spoke up."

"No, I don't suppose so. There will be a grand weddin', I dare say."

"Oh, I don't doubt it."

"You'll be makin' some of the dresses, I reckon," Mrs. Tippins ventured.

"That I can't tell you," Mrs. Eli answered. "All I know is that if I should get an order, this town will see what good dressmakin' is,

for I'd put my bes' foot right out on Miss Phoebe's weddin' clo'es."

Mrs. Eliathenes spoke modestly, yet with inward confidence that she would be employed in the creation of Phoebe's trousseau. She did not know of the difficulties that lay in the way.

Phoebe's friends were horrified. "You are not going to have Mrs. Eli," they said at once, and urged the superiority of sundry dressmakers, but Phoebe was determined. She would have Mrs. Eli, and no other.

"Not for your wedding dress," they begged.

"The wedding dress is the main thing."

They looked at her aghast. "You are going to let her make it?"

"Yes, I've got a sentiment about it," said Phoebe.

"A sentiment about Mrs. Eli!"

"She will take such an interest in it," said Phoebe.

"Think of the yards of conversation she'll work into it," everyone exclaimed.

But Phoebe was not to be turned from her decision, and Mrs. Eli arrived with her thimble in due course of time, and took the

matter of Phoebe's frocks under consideration.

"I've been sleepin' on 'em ever since you give me the order," she announced.

"An' I got some right cute ideas. Seems like the bes' things come to me in the middle o' the night that way. I don't want you to have nothin' common lookin', Miss Phoebe. Now I did think last week I'd put a cord an' tassel on the weddin' dress, but bless goodness, if I didn't seen three tassels next day. They come by the door, an' Nancy called me to come an' look. I could 'a' cried, Miss Phoebe, when I seen 'em, 'cause I'd set my mind on havin' one for you."

"Well, why not have one?" asked Phoebe.

Mrs. Eli looked her indignation. "Not much!" she exclaimed. "I ain't goin' to have people say you had to copy anybody—partik'lar as them cords an' tassels I seen was not in your circle of society."

She opened a fashion book as she talked, and turned over the pages rapidly to find a model that she fancied. "I an' Nancy picked this one out las' night," she declared.

Phoebe said she thought it was very attractive.

"I ain't contented with that back," Mrs. Eliathenes said, thoughtfully. "An' the back of a weddin' dress is important, for you'll want to know that nobody ain't pickin' you to pieces in the rear, when you're standin' up to take on the responsibilities of life."

Then Mrs. Eli pondered over the pattern, and Phoebe pondered over her responsibilities with a seriousness that well became her. She was not afraid of responsibility. "I think it would be dreadful to go through life without it," she had once said to Dr. Morton. It was upon the occasion of their first meeting, and he had liked her earnestness and sincerity at once.

Of all her friends Dr. Morton was probably the only one who was not surprised at the news of her engagement. He was very proud of having had the astuteness to suspect the young people of what he called "a secret attachment." He felt himself the prime mover in the whole affair, and openly declared that he had brought them together, so to speak.

Tom, on the other hand, was sure that the rain had been the decisive factor in their

destiny. Phoebe believed it to be the Elis, but Dr. Morton was convinced that he had pulled the strings that set circumstances in motion. He took great credit to himself, and called, in a high state of satisfaction, to pay his respects to Phoebe.

Yet their happiness brought him saddening thoughts of days that had gone with his youth, and his eyes became suddenly moist as he took Phoebe's hand and looked into the face that was so girlishly fair. "My dear——" he said, and could get no farther.

"You are glad?" said Phoebe.

"Yes, I'm glad, but he doesn't deserve you."

"I thought you arranged it all," she said, lightly.

"I did, and he's well enough for a man, but he has some trying traits of character, Miss Phoebe — very trying. If you were not a woman, it would be a dangerous undertaking, but as it is — well, he loves you devotedly, and he's a good fellow. That's all I can say for him."

"If he turns out to be half as nice as you are," Phoebe began.

"Men are not nice, Miss Phoebe. Some of

them are mean, and some are not, that's about all. I think Tom is not, or I should not have encouraged you to marry him as I did."

"You surely did encourage me," said Phoebe, "and I shall hold you responsible if we disagree."

"You'll be certain to disagree," the doctor prophesied. "Marriage won't change Tom Burnham to the extent of making him entirely docile, and you are too sensible to hold all of his ideas, so you might as well face the probability of differing occasionally."

"I have," said Phoebe, "but I shall try to remember that I couldn't respect him quite as much if he gave in to me."

"It's providential that such a reflection should help a woman," said Dr. Morton, smiling, and added, "There's another thing—you are marrying a doctor."

"Yes, I know," said Phoebe.

"Ah, but you don't know! His time and his thoughts are not to be yours first of all. I think no young woman understands what demands such a profession will make upon her."

"I think I do," Phoebe protested. "I know that all my plans must give way upon occasion to the needs of Tom's patients, and that I must not interfere when he thinks it necessary to risk his life for them."

"I hope it won't mean that often," Dr. Morton said gravely.

"That's true, though, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes, it's quite true. You would do well to marry into some other profession, my dear."

"But Tom wouldn't think of changing," Phoebe exclaimed.

"Do you want him to change?"

"Never," she declared, and there was courage and conviction in her voice. "I think it is a noble profession, and he wouldn't seem the same man to me in any other. It's because he loves it, that it brings out his finest traits and his best abilities."

Dr. Morton smiled, and then said after a pause, "There's an old song called 'Nancy Lee.' It's out of date now, but I always liked the first line. It begins:

'The sailor's wife, the sailor's star shall be.'

Doctor's wife, and doctor's star wouldn't

sound quite so well, but the idea would be about the same, I fancy."

"I'd be afraid to have Tom steer by me," Phoebe declared.

"He needn't be afraid to do it, though, and that's why you are just the woman for him."

"I hope I am," she said gravely, and then asked, "Won't you tell me, please, just what you think of him?"

"My real opinion," said the doctor, "is that he will improve with age, and I'll admit that he has more possibilities than most of us. For the rest, he's a good deal of a man, which means that he's obstinate, and honest, and brave. That's all I can say for him. It's about the best we can do, and the women have to put up with it."

Phoebe seemed quite content with Tom's virtues, however, and with his friend's recital of them, for she said, "I always knew you appreciated him."

"I do indeed," the doctor declared, "and I wouldn't marry him if a premium were attached, but if you feel called to it, I think you'd be doing a good work, Miss Phoebe, and without too much risk to one of your sweet disposition."

Phoebe laughed, and she told Tom that night that Dr. Morton had said "beautiful things" about him. "Or rather, it was more the way he said it, than what he said," she admitted.

Tom, however, was not interested just then in what Dr. Morton thought about him. There seemed, indeed, only one person whose opinion was worthy of consideration, and since she viewed him with favor, he was content to dismiss the subject and occupy himself with thoughts of her. He was too deeply in love to do anything else, for the transition from despair had been very sudden, and he was dazed with the happiness that filled his life.

"I don't know how I have managed to avoid making some terrible mistake in my work this week. My thoughts have been all of you," he told her.

"You ought not to be such an old-fashioned lover," said Phoebe, well pleased to have him so, nevertheless.

"There's no fashion in love," he said. "It's one of the things that shakes loose from convention, and is a law unto itself in every age."

"But I am rather glad we are living in this age, and right now," Phoebe declared, happily. Tom also was glad, and managed to convince her of his interest in living.

"Are we going to keep house?" she asked at length.

"Of course we are. Do you think I would share you with a whole tableful of boarders —

‘A loaf of bread, and thou,’ ”

he quoted.

"I can't make good bread," she warned him.

"We'll find a bough beside a bakeshop then."

"And pick our fruit from Aphronike's stand," Phoebe added. "I wonder if we should ever have known each other if it had not been for the Elis?" she said, musingly, after a pause.

"I think I should have found you even if Maudalia had not had a 'spagum'," he declared.

"There's no telling, and we must be grateful for the bridge that carried us over," said Phoebe.

"I am grateful, and if his years permitted I should have Nike for best man."

"You might take Aphronike," she reminded him, but Tom said he had never been intimate with Aphronike.

"They shall all come to the wedding," said Phoebe, and when the invitation was delivered, it threw the little Elis into transports of joy.

Mrs. Eliathenes, in her spare moments, began to contrive festal garments for the entire family. "We don't want to make Miss Phoebe ashamed of her friends," she said, and Aphronike, as the occasion drew near, purchased a new pair of shoes, and superintended Nancy, who was bidden to press his best trousers on the ironing board. The wedding was to be at church, and the Elis were going in a carriage.

"I wish it wasn't goin' to be at night, 'cause I'd like the neighbors to see us drivin' off," said Mrs. Eli.

"We can light the lamp and put it in the window," Nancy suggested.

"Yes, we can do that, an' then I'll tell 'em all the carriage is comin' for us at eight o'clock, so they can be out."

"I hope the horses will be black, and will shake their heads, and rattle their harness while they are waitin' for us," said Policiander.

"I don't. I hope they'll be white," Nancy exclaimed.

"I don't care what kind of horses they are so long as they go fast," said Nike. "White can get you there just as good as black."

"I wish we could go by the Mulligans, and show them how grand we look," Nancy cried.

"You mustn't be drivin' 'round town an' showin' off, an' don't let me hear you callin' to anybody outen that carriage winder," Mrs. Eli commanded.

"I'm goin' to ride on top with the driver," Nike announced.

"You are goin' to behave yourself wherever you ride," said his mother. The responsibility of Phoebe's wedding dress had told on her nerves of late, and the children had learned that she was not to be trifled with. "I never been so uneasy in all my life," she declared. "But if I do say it, I have made a dress as I can be proud of to

my dyin' day, an I tell you, she is a beautiful sight in it."

Nancy listened to these comments with rapture. She could scarcely wait for the wedding day. Indeed, Tom himself could not have been more impatient, for added to the excitement and romance of the occasion she was to have the joy of wearing a lovely muslin dress with pink ribbons that Miss Phoebe had presented to her. It was what Nancy called "a store bought" dress, and the contemplation of it filled her with delight. On the morning of the wedding day she spread it out on the bed, and then spent an hour or so putting the ribbons in place and trying the effect of the bows in different spots.

That was an exciting day in the Eliathenes household. It was difficult to keep from dressing at four o'clock in the afternoon, and at five the fruit stand was moved inside for the night and the door shut. Then Nancy was sent to carry Maudalia to Mrs. Jones, who had agreed to keep her while the family went to the wedding.

"It's too soon for you to bring that child

down here," said Mrs. Jones, as Nancy appeared.

"She's most asleep," said Nancy, "an' Ma said she had to send her, 'cause she's beginnin' on Nike, an' it'll take so long to get us all fixed up."

Then Mrs. Jones told Nancy she could put Maudalia on the sofa, and Nancy deposited her at once and ran home as fast as she could. She was afraid she would be late, for it would take a long time to tie those bows, and already the sun was going down.

When the Eliathenes were all dressed, buttoned and brushed, scrubbed and tied, it wanted a full hour by the clock before the carriage would come, and the minutes passed solemnly as they waited, sitting in stiff elegance around the room. Samuel grew sleepy, and yawned once or twice, but his mother gave him a shake, and after that he kept as erect as the others.

It was not long before Nike's good shoes began to hurt him, and nothing would do but that he must take them off. Mrs. Eli advised him not to, and so did Nancy, but Nike became suddenly desperate, so he took them off, and when half past seven struck,

and Nancy ran to the door in excitement, he was in terror lest he should not be ready and hurried to put the shoes on again.

His feet had swelled in the unfortunate interim, however, and as time passed it was quite evident that he would not be able to make the same appearance that he had before.

"I can't get 'em on!" he exclaimed at length, quite breathless with the effort.

"Don't try no more. You mashed up your shirt a'ready," said his mother. "You'll have to wear your old ones, an' to think of all the trouble I took to have you make a good appearance, and now what will you look like?"

Nike hung his head. Then an idea occurred to him, and he ran into the back room and came out wearing his father's extra pair of shoes. They were somewhat long, but Nike's foot accommodated itself easily to larger quarters, and he was at least comfortable.

"Well, it's the best we can do," said Mrs. Eliathenes, philosophically, and soothed herself with a glance at the resplendent Nancy.

The matter was scarcely settled when the

clatter of horses' feet was heard without. Then they were off to the wedding before they knew it, and had neglected to have the carriage wait at the door for the edification of the neighbors, as Nancy and her mother had planned.

It was a wonderful ride. Aphronike and his wife were on the back seat; Nancy, Nike and Policiander in front. The beautiful muslin dress was lifted with care, and the pink sash ends were laid right and left across the knees of the boys. The lights of the city flashed mysteriously as they went along and countless other vehicles passed them in the gloom. When they came to the church, Nike leaned out excitedly.

"It looks like a circus!" he cried.

Everyone in the carriage leaned forward.

"That ain't nothin' but a awnin' to protec' Miss Phoebe," said Mrs. Eli.

"Can we walk under it?" Policiander asked.

The children were delighted, and yet when they reached the door Nancy was not at all sure that she would not have preferred being seen by the crowd.

Phoebe had told the ushers to set aside a

pew for the Eliathenes, so the young men were on the lookout for them, and were quite conscious of the sensation that ran through the church when the family group walked up the aisle. Aphronike went first, then Mrs. Eliathenes with Samuel and Policiander by the hand, next Nancy, with conscious tread and bobbing plaits, and lastly Nike, his father's shoes well to the fore.

"Can you turn round?" Nancy whispered to her mother, when they were well settled.

"No," said Mrs. Eli, decidedly, and all the little Elis sat bolt upright; but though they might not turn their heads, they could at least cast their eyes about them.

"Lights in the top of the wall!" said Policiander.

"Look at that blue satin lady!" from Nancy.

"Who's them?" Nike asked.

"Them's bridesmaids," Nancy explained.

"Here's another!" cried Nike, "an' two more!"

"Quit talkin' in church, an' don't scrouge around," said Mrs. Eli, in a violent whisper.

"How can we tell when Miss Phoebe is comin'?" Policiander asked.

"When the music strikes up like a band," said his mother, and then they were quiet for a moment, until Nancy, turning surreptitiously to discover the cause of the movement by the door, caught a glimpse of tulle.

"I seen her!" she cried in excitement, and her shrill voice was heard distinctly in the hush that had fallen on the company.

Everybody smiled, and Nancy was overpowered with shame. Her embarrassment did not last long, however, for the wedding procession was advancing.

"Miss Phoebe looks just like a fairy," she declared.

"No, an angel," Policiander whispered, but Mrs. Eli felt her heart swell with pride as she noted the stately sweep of the train.

"Where's Doctor?" Nike asked in sudden concern, as the bride and her father passed them.

"That's right!" cried Nancy, awakened to a need. "Ma, where's Doctor?"

"He'll be here presently," said Mrs. Eli, not at all clear herself as to what had become of the groom.

"He's up in the pulpit," said Policiander, who had found his friend at once.

Never was there a lovelier bride than Phoebe, as she walked up the long church aisle, to the majestic, time-honored march. Tom saw her face in an aureole of white, and she forgot her dress and her veil as she put her hand in his.

Mrs. Eli never took her eyes off her work of art, and she said afterwards that she heard two ladies wondering who had made so perfect a dress. "It's goin' to be the makin' of this family," she said with conviction, "an' it will be all owin' to Miss Phoebe. There ain't such another livin', an' Doctor is certainly got a pearl."

"Doctor is nice, too, an' he sure looked swell to-night," Nancy declared.

"Doctor is very good for a man," Mrs. Eli agreed, "an' I wish 'em both joy with all my heart."

"They look like they got it," said Nancy.



